



THE



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ELTON: ME AND MY GARDEN
WEEKEND



FOOTBALL SATURDAY
Danny Baker
Steve McManaman
Oliver Holt
SPORT

Shares slide after Hong Kong crash



BY JANET BUSH
AND ALASDAIR MURRAY
IN LONDON
AND JONATHAN MIRSKY
IN HONG KONG

THE London stock market suffered its biggest one-day fall since Black Monday — October 16, 1987 — as the shockwaves from an overnight crash in Hong Kong swept round the world.

In London, more vulnerable than most to a meltdown in Hong Kong because of extensive British interests and investments in the former colony, the FTSE 100 index of leading shares closed down 157.3 points at 4,991.5. At one point, the FTSE had plunged 222 points with big falls for companies such as

HSBC, which over the past few days has lost its position as Britain's biggest quoted company.

In Hong Kong, the Hang Seng index had its worst day, closing down by more than 10 per cent, plunging 1,211.47 points to finish at 10,426.30. That was an even bigger drop than its loss on the day of the 1987 stock market crash. The Hang Seng has lost nearly 25 per cent of its value this week and about 35 per cent since Hong Kong was returned to China in July.

Yesterday's selling was provoked by fears that international speculators, who have already forced devaluations of most other currencies in the Far East, now have the Hong Kong dollar in their sights.

On Wall Street, the Dow Jones fell

170 points in the first few minutes of trading and lurched into another wave of selling after European markets closed, to stand 220 points lower.

Richard Jeffrey, group economist at Charterhouse Group, said: "Hong Kong is a minor market relative to world markets, but it is having a large psychological impact at a time when investors are worrying that the bull market may have run its course."

Hong Kong's leaders stood firm yesterday in defence of the Hong Kong dollar, which has been pegged to the US dollar for the past 14 years and is regarded as the key to the territory's economic success and stability in recent years. Interest rates soared to defend the currency

and make speculation prohibitively expensive. Overnight interest rates charged to banks jumped to as high as 300 per cent from 6 per cent on Wednesday morning. Several banks raised their prime rates yesterday by 0.75 per cent to 9.50 per cent.

The attack on the Hong Kong dollar took on dangerous momentum after Taiwan abandoned its usual staunch defence of its currency late last week. Taiwan had been regarded as a haven of economic stability in the Far East, so badly battered by selling over the past two months, and its decision to allow the Taiwan dollar to float sent a powerfully negative message to investors in Hong Kong.

Tung Chee-hwa, Hong Kong's Chief Executive, who has been vis-

iting London this week, promised that the Hong Kong dollar would be defended. He said: "There is tremendous determination on the part of the Hong Kong Government to maintain the exchange rate. We have every confidence this can be done. We have signalled to the market our determination. Interest rates have gone up and as a result there is a short-term repatriation on the stock market. This is to be expected."

Sir Donald Tsang, Hong Kong's Financial Secretary, could not have sent a clearer message to speculators about the foreign exchange reserves that were ready to be mobilised. "Joseph Yau (Chief of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority) is sitting on more than \$88 billion.

He'll push the button. He'll use it if needed," he said.

Even in the teeth of panic selling, Hong Kong economists were relatively sanguine that the territory could weather the storm. Elizabeth Soon, director of South East Asia for Schroders Investment Management, said that the Hong Kong market is undervalued at these levels and is gradually buying shares. There were, however, some sceptical voices. John Reynolds, head of research at ING Barings, said: "There is absolutely zero incentive to stay at the moment. 'Long live the Hong Kong dollar.'"

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Au pair tells of attempt to revive dying baby

FROM TUNKU VARADARAJAN
IN CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

THE British au pair Louise Woodward, accused of murdering an eight-month-old baby in her care, told the jury yesterday that she did not ever shake, hit or slam the baby.

In her long-awaited appearance in the witness box, Miss Woodward, calm, composed and articulate, told the court of how she found Matthew Eappen on February 4, the day on which he was rushed unconscious to hospital.

She said: "He seemed off colour. His eyes were half closed. He wasn't breathing properly. He was gasping for breath. I tried to give him CPR [cardio pulmonary resuscitation], then I called 911."

without tremor. Later, however, she broke down as she described how Matthew slipped into a coma.

In the gallery, her father, Gary, clenched his fist nervously and his wife, Susan, smiled ashenly at her daughter.

Miss Woodward, dressed in a navy blue blazer and a knee-length checked skirt, proceeded to answer a series of questions about her life as an au pair in America and the reasons why she came here in the first place. "It was a chance for a young person to experience another culture, language and to have the experience of taking care of children in an American family."

How to pick a nanny Page 19

Minutes earlier, she had been asked by Andrew Good, her defence lawyer, a series of questions.

Q: Did you ever shake Matthew?

A: No.

Q: Did you ever hit Matthew?

A: No.

Q: Did you ever slam Matthew about the head?

A: No.

Q: Did you ever slam Matthew at all?

A: No.

The entire panel of jurors watched intently as Miss Woodward looked her questioner in the eye and spoke

She said she came from a large extended family in Chester, and that she was the eldest of 13 grandchildren. She said: "We always got together once a week. I would take charge. I would play with them and take care of them."

When asked why she chose to be an au pair, she said: "Working with children is something I enjoy."

She said that in early 1996 she had gone to Manchester for an interview with an agency which placed European girls with American families. In June 1996 she went to the home of the Komishane family near Boston, but said it was not what she had expected. "I guess I didn't really have a clear picture of what the place was like. I didn't realise their



Louise Woodward biting her nails yesterday before starting to give her evidence in the Massachusetts court

house was situated in the woods," she said.

She looked after the family's eight-month-old boy, named Landon. She said: "I loved Landon very much. We got on well. But I did have certain problems with the family. I didn't feel I was getting to do everything I had come here to do."

Miss Woodward then told of

how isolated she felt in the village, cut off from Boston and its attractions because transport links were poor. She did not have a car and her curfew, at 11pm every night, meant that she could seldom venture out without returning home late.

It was her problem with this curfew that led her to look for another family, and she eventually settled on the Eappens.

Miss Woodward described a typical day at the Eappens, which would begin at 7.45am after the parents had left for work. She said: "The first thing I would do was to take charge of the children. I had to prepare their meals, change diapers and play with the children. The house was stuffed with toys and books."

"I did a lot of make-believe with Brendan [a two-year-old]. We danced to music. He liked to sing. At least once a day we tried to go to the park for a walk, if it was not too cold. We got Matthew as much as we possibly could. Brendan would help me if I was changing Matthew. Matthew was a placid baby. He

Two charged over 'road rage' deaths

BY ADRIAN LEE

A SECOND-HAND car dealer will appear in court today charged with the manslaughter of Toby Exley and Karen Martin in a suspected road rage incident.

Jason Humble, 32, of Farnborough, Hampshire, was arrested early yesterday morning at his home.

A second man, Keith Collier, 49, also a car dealer, is charged with assisting an offender and will also appear at Feltham Magistrates' Court southwest London.

It is alleged that he falsely reported the theft of a car to police, knowing it had been involved in a fatal road accident five days earlier, and tried to impede the arrest of someone who had committed manslaughter.

A car which is alleged to belong to one of the men, and is believed to have been involved in the crash, was recovered from a pub car park.

Mr Exley, 22, a chef, and his 20-year-old girlfriend, a financial assistant, died when their Ford Fiesta crossed the central reservation of a dual carriageway and was hit by an oncoming car.

It is believed their car may have been nudged from behind by the driver of a car following them on the A316 road in Hartworth, west London.

Police said a white Vauxhall Senator recovered yesterday matched descriptions given by witnesses, including part of the registration plate.

"We are confident it is the same vehicle," said a Metropolitan Police source. "We are examining it for damage." He was unable to say if any attempt had been made to conceal the vehicle.

The couple's car was allegedly hit three times on October 6 because they were travelling too slowly.

After the incident police said that they would use national computers to trace all cars with registration plates beginning KS.

Continued on page 2, col 5

First conviction for attack by laser

BY ADRIAN LEE

A TEENAGER who shone a dangerous beam into a policeman's eyes yesterday became the first person to be convicted of assault by a laser pen.

The devices, which have a range of 200ft, are designed for use by lecturers to pinpoint text on overhead charts. But they have also become a craze among teenagers and are popular in clubs and at concerts. They cost from about £30, and can be bought without restriction, although a doctor warned yesterday that they can damage the eye in the time it takes to blink.

A laser pen produces a narrow beam of light whose intensity is 100 times greater than looking at the sun and 100 million times more intense than the light from a television set. The same technology is being used to produce digital video discs. In a series of recent incidents, bus drivers and a fireman have been injured.

Leicester magistrates heard yesterday that a policeman

became aware of a red light shining in his eyes near a car in which Mark Taberer, 19, was sitting. Mark Williams, for the prosecution, said: "He felt discomfort and it was an annoyance." Officers found a laser pen on Taberer's key ring.

The teenager, of Oadby, Leicestershire, who admitted common assault, was given an absolute discharge and ordered to pay £25 costs.

Jane Holland, for the de-

fence, said he did not know the pen was dangerous and had not deliberately shone it into the police car. "He was using the pen to create pretty patterns in the sky... he bought the pen as a novelty and did not intentionally buy it to cause people injury." Low-powered lasers, such as those used in supermarket scanners, are harmless but the laser pens are much stronger — between one and five milliwatts — and can cause permanent damage to the retina.

Dr Ajoy Kar, of Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh, wants sales of the battery-operated pens controlled. Although the pens have been on sale for more than five years, the power of the lasers has increased five fold. "They are now strong enough to cause permanent retinal damage and, in extreme cases, blindness," said Dr Kar, a reader in physics who is conducting a study of laser pens.

Last month, Liam and Noel Gallagher of the band Oasis complained that they had been targeted by a laser pen

during a concert at London's Earl's Court. In February, Vinnie Jones the Wimbledon footballer was also a victim when he accused Leicester City fans of shining a beam in his face as he took a throw in.

David Bowie, the Labour MEP for Cleveland and Richmond, is leading moves to have the sale of laser pens controlled and has demanded an investigation by the European Commission. At present the pens can be bought over the counter or by mail order.

Earlier this month six bus drivers were temporarily blinded in separate incidents by children using the pens. They were treated in hospital. David Sanderson, a fireman from Durham, is off work after a "pinprick of light" hit him in the eye as he tackled a fire. He said: "It made me blink. Later on my eye became very sore and bloodshot." He has been told there will not be permanent damage.

In America, a girl who claims she was injured by a laser pen is seeking damages from the manufacturers.

Euro-vote to ban milk chocolate

The European Parliament has announced that the term "milk chocolate" should be outlawed and sales of the British product banned across the European Union until it is tested further.

The Strasbourg vote, which could be overturned, was a setback in the campaign to end the EU's 24-year chocolate war. This has pitted Belgium, France and other "cocoa purists" against Britain and six others. Page 5

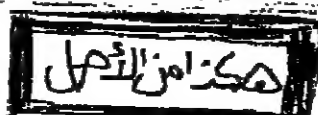
Brown's credit to Whitehall staff

Gordon Brown has decided to credit civil servants with common sense in a scheme to cut unnecessary paperwork and save millions of pounds a year.

Officials are to be issued with Visa cards to buy office materials, ending the need for countless order forms, estimates and phone calls before being authorised to buy even the most inexpensive office equipment. Page 11

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Tories take a tip from friends across the pond

THE successful candidate knows "the importance of adopting a new language and a more friendly style". Sounds familiar. The new caring and compassionate side of the Tory party perhaps? It is, in fact, from *The Language of the 21st Century*, a report circulated by Frank Luntz, the Republican pollster and adviser to the Congressional leadership.

The Blairites are not the only people to borrow ideas from across the Atlantic. Mr Luntz is well known in Tory circles in London. He has close contacts with the Social Market Foundation, whose founders, Danny Finkelstein and Andrew

Cooper, are now the research and political directors at Conservative Central Office. The links between the Luntz memo and the new Tory approach at the Blackpool conference were admitted as a "fair cop" when I pointed them out yesterday. The Luntz memo tells the Republicans that they are out of touch. The American people "really think Bill Clinton feels their pain, and they really think you feel nothing". The successful candidate, it argues, knows how much average Americans "want to regain a sense of belonging and community in their lives". The successful candi-

date knows both how to "speak in terms of people, ideas and vision" rather than dollars and cents, facts and figures, and the importance of "listening to women and adopting a new language and a more friendly style".

Discussing the memo in the current edition of *The New Yorker*, Henry Louis Gates reports that when "the subject is education, the candidate must say things like 'Education is about the future'... even when the subject is not, the candidate must learn to say, 'It's about the children'."

As Hanna Rosin writes in *The New Republic*, "After complaining that Bill Clinton has stolen their issues, Republicans have decided to steal his style. The style, that is, of simulated pain and no real feeling, after which nothing gets done."

PETER RIDDELL

RIDDELL ON POLITICS

Glenys Kinnock accuses MEPs of 'extremism'

BY ANDREW PIERCE
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

GLENYS KINNOCK yesterday inflamed the row over the suspension of four Labour MEPs by accusing them of trying to revive the extremism that her husband Neil had sought to banish.

But Labour MPs at Westminster yesterday rallied to the defence of Ken Coates, the leader of the rebels, and accused Tony Blair of trying to suppress debate. The MEPs—Mr Coates, Hugh Kerr, Alex Falooner and Michael Hindley—said yesterday that they would fight on. They were suspended for refusing to sign an order preventing them from discussing with the media the proportional representation system to be used for the European Parliament elections in 1999.

Mrs Kinnock, a Euro-MP whose husband became an

BRITAIN TENTH FOR SEX EQUALITY

Tony Blair's Government comes tenth in a league table of sexual equality among 40 countries surveyed by the Council of Europe. First is Sweden, where 50 per cent of the senior ministers are

women. Norway, with 42 per cent, is second. Five of the Government's 22 Cabinet Ministers (23 per cent) are women. Britain came twelfth in the percentages of women MPs in each country, with 18 per cent.

EU Commissioner after nine years as Labour leader, said: "This is a very small hard core. These people over many years have just been wreckers. I am obviously familiar over the years with this sort of thing, when Neil was party leader, as he tried to do something about the problem. The party went through all this in the past and there is no wish for this kind of thing to rear its ugly head again."

There was surprising support for the rebels from Joe

Ashton, whose Bassetlaw constituency is in Mr Coates's Nottingham and Chesterfield Euro-constituency. He said: "I am on the opposite wing of the party from Ken and I have crossed swords with him in the past. But I have some sympathy for him on this issue."

"The subject has not been properly debated and it should have been. This has caused unease in the constituency parties, who have not been properly consulted. This is

about the leadership choosing candidates, and constituency parties will not like it."

Harry Barnes, whose Derbyshire North East seat is also in Mr Coates's constituency, said: "I am becoming increasingly concerned at the move towards intolerance in our party."

Mrs Kinnock, who was speaking at Strasbourg, described the four suspended men as "posturers". She said: "They are loving all this attention, which far outweighs their importance and significance to the Labour group."

She said that she was determined to voice the views of the vast majority of the 62 MEPs, who last week were given closer links with Mr Blair's Government. He has approved 19 of his MEPs, including Mrs Kinnock, attending Whitehall departmental meetings and shadowing all government ministries.

The four rebels will still sit as MEPs and will be expected to take the Labour whip. They fear that the new selection process was a device to leave them off the Euro-lists in 1999 in favour of more Blairite candidates.

Mr Coates kept up the attack on the Prime Minister in *Tribune* yesterday. He wrote of "the systematic opportunism which drives new Labour further and further to the right and pits it against the needs of the poorest people in the country. But it remains quite useful that there are two parliaments, two manifestos and a reminder of what Labour used to be."



Gary Woodward and his wife Susan, listening to evidence in their daughter's defence

Woodward evidence

Continued from page 1
liked to watch us, especially when we danced about. I'd lay him on his nunny as much as I could." She told of how she was interviewed by the Eappen family in early November 1996, some weeks before she moved in with them. "Debbie's mum was there, and Debbie [Deborah Eappen, Matthew's mother], Sunil [the father] and the two children. It was very pleasant and relaxed. Debbie breastfed Matthew while I was there. We discussed the general responsibilities and we talked about a curfew."

She described how they had been deadlocked on the question, because the Eappens were keen that she should follow a curfew. Apparently, they had had problems with previous au pairs and did not want those to recur.

Miss Woodward continued: "I told them that I did not want a curfew because I had never had one in England. I thought that I could take on the

responsibility myself of deciding when I should come and when I should go. Ultimately, they agreed that she should come for a one month's trial period without a curfew, and that the situation would be reviewed as it progressed."

Mr Good, her lawyer, then moved on to the subject of the musical *Rent*, which, the jury has seen more than 20 times. It was her inability to go to the theatre in the evenings that had caused the most acute problems when she lived with the Komishane family. Miss Woodward explained how the musical fascinated her.

"It is a very energetic show and I think it is aimed very specifically at my age group. It's just a lot of fun to watch really. The music is a mixture. I guess you could say that it is kind of rock music."

Ashen and impassive on previous days, Miss Woodward was yesterday a picture of teenage vivacity. The de-

fence's gamble, which was to convey to the jury that the accused was a normal, healthy teenage girl appeared to be working. Often, when she smiled, jurors would appear to smile back.

The decision to put Miss Woodward on the stand at Middlesex Superior Court in Cambridge was an apparent victory for Mr Good over Barry Scheck, Miss Woodward's main defence lawyer. Sources close to the defence team say that he was "luke warm" about the idea of exposing her to the glare of cross-questioning.

Mr Scheck, whose masterful performance so far has chipped away at the credibility of a number of the prosecution's medical witnesses, believed that Miss Woodward was "ahead on points" already and that her team had introduced a sufficiently powerful element in the minds of jurors for them to now find it impossible to convict her of first-degree murder.

IN BRIEF

University students contract meningitis

Two 19-year-old first year male students have caught meningitis at a university where two died in an outbreak 11 months ago. The two are recovering well in hospital but the 8,000 other students on the same campus at the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff, have been alerted to watch out for symptoms of the disease.

The students from Worcester and Canterbury are on different courses and not believed to have been in contact. Both have Group B meningococcal meningitis.

By-election date

The Winchester by-election, which is to be held after the High Court ruled the constituency's result in the general election void, is to take place on November 20. The Liberal Democrats will formally move the writ on Tuesday after MPs return to the House of Commons.

Malaria death

A new system for screening blood donors was being introduced when Cecil Cook, 78, of Colchester, died from cerebral malaria in August, two weeks after receiving contaminated blood as treatment for anaemia, an inquest at was told. Verdict: medical misadventure.

Council threat

A government "hit squad" will take over the social services department of Sefton council on Merseyside if it is not improved within two months, the Health Minister Paul Boateng said yesterday. An inspection of the department found "disturbing and serious failures".

Paper guilty

The *London Evening Standard* was guilty of contempt of court over an article that halted a terrorism trial in January, Lord Justice Kennedy ruled in the High Court. He said it was clear publication had been an accident and he reserved the size of the fine to a later date.

RAF pilot dies

Flight Lieutenant Leigh Alexander Fox, 35, originally from Epping in Essex, who was killed in a mid-air collision in the Mojave desert in California on Wednesday, was on a pilot exchange mission with his wife and young family, the Ministry of Defence said.

TV Tarantino

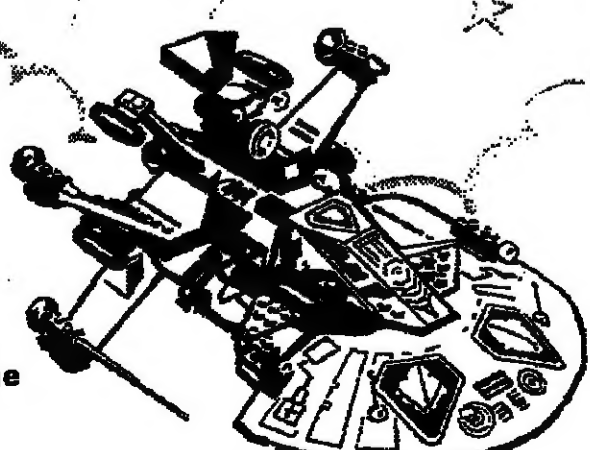
The film *Pulp Fiction*, which won the top prize at Cannes but bricks for its scenes of violence, drug-taking and swearing, is to be shown on BBC television. Quentin Tarantino's Oscar-winning movie is to be screened virtually uncut on BBC2 on November 2.

Portfolio prize

Andrea Carter, an investment banker from Battersea, South London, has won £4,000 in the *Times* Portfolio game. She said: "I have never won anything before, not even £10 on the lottery. I'm speechless." Ms Carter, 35, said she may spend some of the money on a holiday.

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WINDSOR

BBC row settled by compromise

BY RAYMOND SNODDY, MEDIA EDITOR

THE rebellion by BBC presenters and editors over the future organisation of radio and television news ended yesterday when the corporation's governors accepted a compromise formula.

The journalists had rebelled over plans to downgrade the editors of programmes such as *Newsnight* and *Today*. Even Sir Christopher Bland, chairman of the BBC, did not know of the plans. Yesterday, the governors approved modifications designed to meet "concerns expressed both inside and outside the BBC that the editorial distinctiveness of certain programmes might be affected". In particular, the governors said, the position of

programme editors had been safeguarded.

Editors will retain their own budgets and have their own regular staff. Four executive editors will have more of a coordinating role to eliminate waste and to ensure that different programmes are not chasing the same stories and interviews. The role of a fifth executive editor, who would have been able to commission features across the entire journalistic output of the BBC, has also been downgraded to a coordinating role.

John Humphrys, the *Today* presenter, said when the compromise began to take shape that viewers and listeners would be the winners.

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PRUDENTIAL

Piggott & Son: horses run in the family

Champion jockey takes his boy along for the ride on a big day at the races, writes Lin Jenkins

LIKE father like son. Lester Piggott's four-year-old son Jamie made his racecourse debut yesterday. Having been put in the saddle when he was 18 months old, Jamie had a two-year start on his father who was three before his father Keith, a national hunt jockey and trainer, put him on a horse.

The pair were taking part in a celebrity parade at Wincanton yesterday where 44 years ago the 11 times champion jockey, now 61, rode his first victory over hurdles.

The proud father, with nine Derby wins to his credit, hoped his only son will follow in his footsteps. "There is nothing in the world that would make me happier than to watch my son win that race. Now that would be a dream," he said recently.

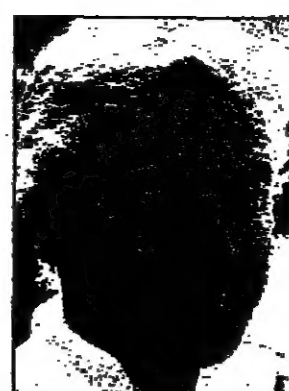
But yesterday, as he gave Jamie a grounding in the race day atmosphere — Jamie rode a Riding for the Disabled pony called Cabby past the applauding crowd — Mr Piggott said he had no intention of pushing him. "Jamie has been on a horse a few times since he was 18 months old. We only let him on when he really wants to, but he enjoyed himself today," he said. Mr Piggott



Piggott with his father Keith

himself partnered another racing legend, the grey Desert Orchid, leaving Jamie's mother Anna Ludlow, 41, to lead her son, who was sporting the pink and white colours of his grandfather. He led a parade of racing names alongside his friend Alfie Bradstock, the three-year-old son of the veteran racing commentator Lord Oaksey.

She said afterwards: "We got him sitting in the saddle very early but he



Piggott rode Desert Orchid

is only just getting going. Jamie just loves horses, which I suppose is just as well. He is around them all the time. Lester and I are teaching him between us and I think he certainly has a feel for it."

Mr Piggott started riding out for his father at the age of ten and rode his first winner at 14. His own grandfather Ernie Piggott rode over 1,000 winners and was three times champion jockey over the jumps, winning the Grand National in 1912 and 1913. Another ancestor won the Derby in 1821.

Mr Piggott had two daughters, Tracey, 32, and Maureen, 36, by his wife of 38 years Susan. He has an unconventional arrangement living with his wife in the £1.5 million Eve Lodge Stables in Newmarket, while being a frequent visitor at the home in Cheveley, Cambridgeshire, five minutes' drive away, of Jamie and his mother, his close friend for 16 years.



Jamie Piggott leading the parade on Cabby at Wincanton racecourse yesterday

Man accused of assault by shouting in wife's ear

By SIMON DE BRISSELES

A TEACHER who allegedly shouted at his wife so loudly that she suffered permanent ear damage appeared in court yesterday accused of assault.

Peter Pryor, 58, was said to have held his wife's arms by her sides as he put his mouth to her ear and yelled at the top of his voice. His 54-year-old wife, Christine, now wears a hearing aid and suffers constant ringing in her ears.

Mr Pryor, who ran a private tuition business with his wife from their farmhouse in north Devon, suffers from the hearing disorder tinnitus and wanted his wife to know what he was going through. Exeter Crown Court was told. He denies assaulting his wife and causing her actual bodily harm in a series of shouting incidents.

Mrs Pryor, who also works as a teacher, said she married Mr Pryor in 1981 but their marriage had been in trouble for several years. They have divorced since the alleged assaults.

She said her husband suffered from tinnitus as a result of shouting when he was younger. "At the end of 1995 he did something totally out of character. We had incidents before but nothing like this. It was in our home. I was in the kitchen preparing a meal and he just came up behind me, held my arms down by my sides, put his mouth over my ear and shouted at me."

"He had his mouth over my ear. He went to the right ear first and he said something to

the effect of 'I'm going to make you suffer like I do,' and he referred to his tinnitus."

Mrs Pryor said she suffered noises in her ears for about three weeks after the first incident. She had been subjected to an identical attack early in 1996 which had left her with permanent damage. She said there was a third attack on the night before a consultation at the North Devon District Hospital in Barnstaple.

John Riddington-Young, ear nose and throat consultant at the hospital, said he had examined Mrs Pryor's ears before the final assault and found there was only minor damage to one ear drum. He said she was suffering from tinnitus when he saw her in December 1996 after the last of the three incidents.

He told the jury: "If the mouth was put right over the ear, as Mrs Pryor described, and the voice is extremely loud, although this is a very rare cause of tinnitus, I would think it would be enough, to cause it. She says the tinnitus came on immediately after the assault. The balance of probability would favour this as a cause."

Counsel for Mr Pryor, of Shirwell, near Barnstaple, called Patrick Beasley, consultant ear specialist at the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital, who said the type of hearing damage Mrs Pryor complained of was not characteristic of noise-induced tinnitus. The trial continues.

Liverpool fans jailed by French to deter hooligans

FROM SUSAN BELL IN PARIS

THREE Liverpool football hooligans were being beginning four-month jail terms yesterday after a French judge answered calls to make an example of them to deter troublemakers from marauding the World Cup next year.

The men were convicted of an unprovoked drunken attack on a passer-by before their team's UEFA cup tie in Strasbourg on Tuesday.

James Kerr, 32, a sport shop manager; Matthew Godden, 21, a market trader; and Paul Roach, 32, a roofer, were sentenced by Judge Aimée Roehrig at the Strasbourg Correctional Court on Wednesday. The jail terms, which also include four months' suspended sentence, came after Nicolas Besson, the prosecutor, said that an example should be made of the three men to send a message to English fans planning to visit France for the World Cup.

"After drinking litres of beer these people felt as if they were in a conquered land. It was a combination of alcohol and fanaticism," said M Besson, who also cited British fighting in Rome this month.

The British fans had attacked their victim as they were walking through Strasbourg before the game, which Liverpool lost 3-0. They hit him with an umbrella, before punching and kicking him, witnesses said.

Six fans spent a night in police custody but were released without charge after the victim and witnesses failed to pick them out of an identity parade.

Church is good for the body as well as the soul

GOING to church can be good for the body as well as the soul, scientists claimed yesterday. Researchers in the United States say they have found a link between religious observance and a healthy immune system.

The team led by Harold Koenig interviewed and tested a randomly selected group of 1,771 elderly adults in North Carolina — the heart of America's bible belt. Participants underwent blood tests for substances that indicate the activity of the immune system.

The 60 per cent who went to church at least once a week were only half as likely as the rest to have raised levels of IL-6, a protein associated with weak immune systems.

High levels of the protein are commonly seen in people with AIDS, Alzheimer's disease and lymphoma.

Similar results were found for four of eight other substances tested to assess the immune system.

Dr Koenig, from Duke University Medical Center in Durham, North Carolina, said: "We think there is a link between religious faith, mental health and immune function. People who have a strong faith, go to church, and have the support of others involved in the church, are less depressed and less stressed. They are not as anxious as other people, and that has major consequences because we know that people who are anxious and de-

pressed have weaker immune systems. There's a lot of negative stuff said about religion, but there may be a lot of benefits to it in terms of mental and physical health."

The findings were published in the October issue of *The International Journal of Psychiatry in Medicine*. Dr Koenig said that another study from the University of California at Berkeley in June showed that churchgoers had a death rate significantly lower than average.

But he did not think people with no religious conviction could make themselves healthier simply by going to church. It was the peace of mind gained from religious belief that mattered, he said.

Without question, her career has been triumphantly consistent over the years. Yet Dame Kiri Te Kanawa readily admits that one thing has changed: her attitude to time.

"In *Der Rosenkavalier* it is so beautifully expressed," she says. "For at night *The Marschallin* passes through the house and stills all the clocks, wishing she could stop time running. And yet she

knows she cannot; time melts away for her like snow."

For many years now Dame Kiri has worn a Rolex and insists that she would never be without it. Of her treasured gold Lady Datejust she says, "it is very beautiful, very elegant, quite wonderful."

It is most gratifying indeed to hear that in an ever accelerating world, certain things at least remain constant.

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Tomorrow in THE SATURDAY TIMES

CRACKLE AND POP

Waking up with Zoe Ball

PLUS

metro

Beck's back

Railways told to cut delays or face more regulation

BY ARTHUR LEATHLEY, TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

THE privatised rail companies have been told that they face tighter regulation unless they make immediate improvements to their record on train delays.

Most of the 25 train operators reported poorer performance this summer than during the previous year, prompting claims from their critics that the initial improvements after privatisation were disappearing.

Passengers on more than two-thirds of routes suffered poorer punctuality than a year ago, and half the routes showed increasing numbers of cancellations. The route with the worst performance for punctuality was the West Coast main line run by Richard Branson's Virgin Group.

Ministers were said to be "deeply concerned" by the figures and officials said that the rail companies' performance would be assessed in

detail over the winter before a decision was taken next spring on how to improve services.

John O'Brien, the franchising director, said he would keep a close watch on the figures: "Obviously, I am disappointed that the improvement we have seen across the board in reliability and punctuality over the last 18 months has not been generally maintained."

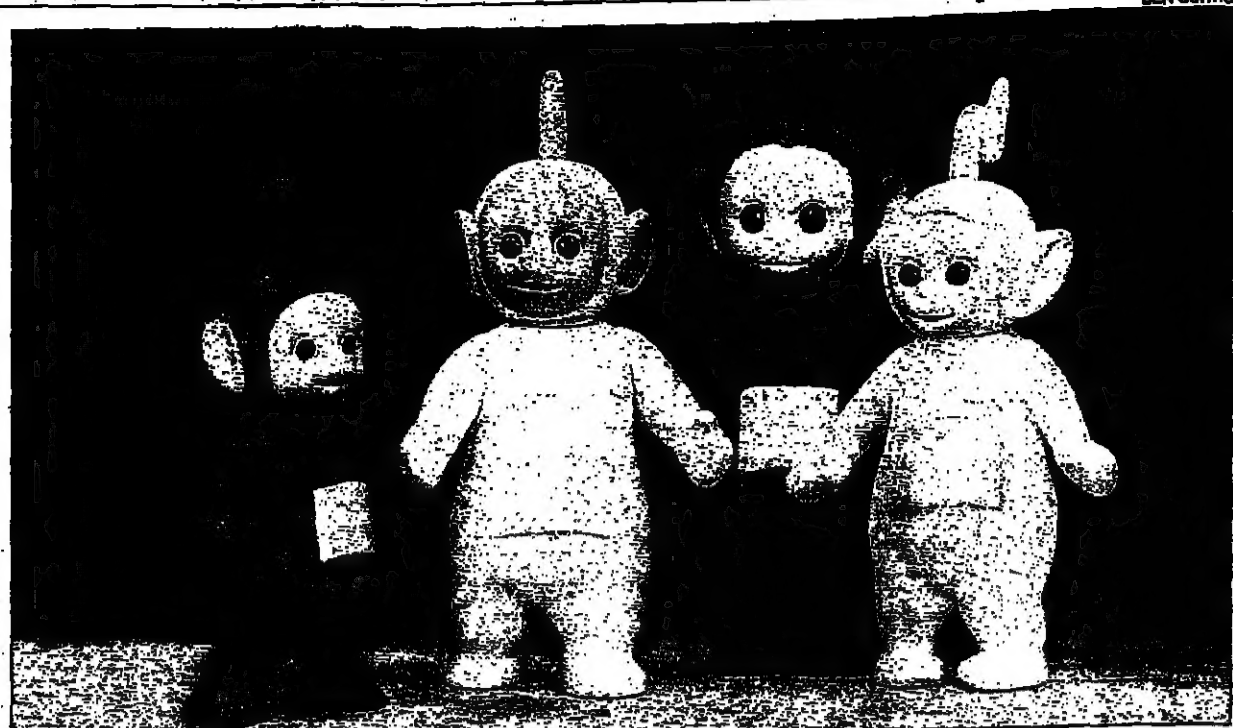
However, performance is generally still significantly better than the benchmarks set in 1994-95.

Punctuality on Virgin's Scottish routes fell further behind all other rail services, with one in four trains failing to arrive within ten minutes of schedule. The West Coast line, which Virgin took over in March this year, has traditionally been the worst-performing line in Britain, but serious track and bridge problems during August are blamed for further deterioration.

Other companies reporting worsening services included Anglia, Great Western, Connex South Central and Regional Railways North East. Those that improved included Thameslink, from Bedford to Brighton, Cardiff Railways and Silverlink, formerly North London Railways.

Rail industry sources say that the worsening of many services during the summer will increase pressure on companies in the winter season, when weather is likely to cause greater problems.

Mike Paterson, secretary of the Central Rail Users' Consultative Committee, the passenger watchdog, said the figures were "very disappointing. Earlier indications were that performance generally was improving, but it now seems as though the effort into achieving that improvement is dissipating."



Po, Dipsy, Tinky Winky and Laa-Laa, the soft Teletubbies toys many children may not get this Christmas

Festive memo to parents: panic now

THE appeal of Teletubbies, the BBC's furry creatures with screens in their stomachs, has caused the first Christmas toy shortage, with 62 shopping days left (writes Michael Horsfield).

Stores are already rationing sales of Po (recommended price £11), Laa-Laa (£12), Dipsy (£13), and Tinky Winky (£14), to one per customer. The shortage

is put down to the failure of retailers to anticipate demand.

Golden Bear Products, the Telford-based manufacturer of the "hottest toy" of the year, showed a prototype of the soft version at the British Toy and Hobby Trade Fair at Olympia in January. That was two months before BBC2 launched the programme, and

most retailers were unimpressed.

It takes six months to get a new toy into production, and it was not until July that retailers realised their popularity. Golden Bear said that 700,000 soft Teletubbies would be imported from factories in the Far East between now and Christmas, but that would not be nearly enough to satisfy the craze.

BMA says 200 hospitals may have to close

BY IAN MURRAY, MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

HALF of Britain's 400 hospitals might have to be closed and the rest be modernised and expanded, doctors' leaders said yesterday.

The British Medical Association has submitted the £5 billion programme to the Government, which is shortly to publish a White Paper on the future of the NHS, as the cheapest and least controversial of five options to meet the growing demands on the service. The BMA hopes it will help persuade the Government that funding the NHS requires increased taxation.

"The status quo is no longer an option," said James Johnston, chairman of the BMA's consultants' committee. "A lot of the problems we face are becoming intractable. They can only be solved by change."

The proposed plan would be "politically very difficult but events will make rationalisation inevitable", Mr Johnston said.

"Shutting down half the hospitals would be a courageous decision. Now is the only time you could do it when you have a Government with a large majority, more than two years away from an election."

Alan Langlands, Chief Executive of the NHS, told a conference of consultants in London yesterday that the Government was looking at the need for more resources for the service. He hinted strongly that patients would not be charged but did not rule out tax rises or rationing to conserve resources.

"I do have some concerns about user charges that would result in exclusions of patients," Mr Langlands said, noting that Australia had abandoned an attempt to charge hospital patients for their keep because the charge was too difficult to collect and meant that many patients were too poor to be admitted.

With the economy growing, he said, the NHS could expect to receive 3 per cent more money annually and the public would be prepared to pay more in taxes to fund it.

CORRECTION

Chiang Jing-guo, referred to in a report (September 25) concerning the death of his brother, was the son of the late President Chiang Kai-shek by his first wife.

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Charles Bremner
witnesses a
sweet victory
for continental
cocoa purists

THE decision is almost enough to recall the Milk Tray man from last month's retirement, and send him swooping from his helicopter one last time, to attack Strasbourg delegates.

The European Parliament announced yesterday that the term "milk chocolate" should be outlawed and sales of the British product banned across the European Union until it is tested further.

The Strasbourg vote, which could be overturned, was a setback in the campaign to end the EU's 24-year chocolate war. This has pitted Belgium, France and other "cocoa purists" against Britain and six other states where makers add cheaper vegetable fats to the product.

The European Commission had presented a draft law to lift a ban on sales of the British-style confection in eight EU countries that restrict the word "chocolate" to the 100 per cent cocoa product. But after a heated debate, the Parliament attached stringent conditions to the new proposal.

It voted by 316-112 to delete a provision that would allow Britain to use the expression "milk chocolate". Victorious Belgian chocolate fundamentalists suggested that the product should be renamed something like "chocolate with milk and non-cocoa vegetable fats". The Parliament backed by a

strong majority a requirement that the label on the British-style product must state that it contains up to 5 per cent of non-cocoa vegetable fat. It effectively blocked exports by insisting that the EU monitor the 5 per cent limit technology for reliable testing has not yet been developed.

In Britain, John Redwood, Shadow Trade Secretary, posed outside the House of Commons with a 1kg bar of Dairy Milk to throw his support behind British chocolate. He called the vote by MEPs a "meddlesome restriction on a flourishing trade" and urged the Government to fight the measures.

Caroline Jackson, a Conservative MEP, denounced the votes as "a major setback for British consumers" and "a bad day for Milk Tray". "They want us to abolish the name 'milk chocolate' but nobody is offering an alternative," she said. "This is a crazy debate."

Debates over food should be about safety, not what makes a chocolate bar really chocolate.

A spokesman for the Government said that the milk chocolate amendment would probably be rejected at the second reading. Strasbourg officials said it seemed likely that the battle would end within months with a compromise law that would merely require prominent labelling of the 5 per cent non-cocoa content of British-style chocolate sold in the EU.

Europe's two-speed chocolate regime started when Britain and Ireland joined the community in 1973. They were allowed to continue describing their "adulterated" product as chocolate but not to export it. Denmark, Portugal, Austria, Finland and Sweden have since joined the EU with similar exemptions. The chocolate purists are Belgium, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, The Netherlands, Luxembourg and Greece.

Behind the front lines of the chocolate war are the competing interests of the big manufacturers, such as Cadbury-Schweppes, and the cocoa-producing countries of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, who fear a go-ahead for cocoa substitutes in all EU chocolate would lead manufacturers to cut their use of the expensive bean. They estimate this could cost them 100,000 tonnes of cocoa imports worth £200 million a year.



Mr Redwood championing milk chocolate yesterday. He attacked "meddlesome restriction"

British is best bar none, says test panel

By Robin Young

TELLING British chocolate from continental is becoming increasingly hard. A blind tasting has shown that even chocoholics are easily confused about the distinctive qualities of their favourite bars.

The suggestion that British makers should change the name of their product because of the vegetable fat content found little favour with participants in our improvised taste test. But the results showed one thing: that British chocolate-eaters like their bars as they are.

My testing pitted Cadbury's Dairy Milk (minimum 20 per cent milk solids, minimum 20 per cent cocoa solids, includes vegetable fat) and Bourville (minimum 34 per cent cocoa solids) against the Swiss Lindt Excellence bars ("70 per cent cocoa solids") and Green & Black's Organic Dark Chocolate ("made with 70 per cent cocoa beans").

For milk chocolate, the Dairy Milk proved much more popular than Lindt's among tasters in our office. Not a single person referred to the Lindt bar having more chocolate flavour.

The result was not as clear-cut for plain chocolate bars. Here Lindt came back strongly, while Green and Black's also found more favour than Bourville, but Cadbury's Marching Chocolate walked into first place.

Rivals paid activists to halt new Sainsbury's

By A CORRESPONDENT

RIVAL stores secretly provided funds for environmental campaigners to undermine an attempt by Sainsbury's to build a superstore in north London. A confidential document shows that John Lewis, Safeway and Boots contributed to the £10,000 cost of lawyers employed by the Stop the Store Alliance to argue its case at a two-week public inquiry into the new supermarket, in Holloway.

The inquiry, held in April last year, announced in January that it had rejected Sainsbury's application for a superstore, petrol station and 400 parking spaces accessed by a major new road. The application had the backing of Islington council.

The document, a briefing note written by the alliance last year, states: "The Stop the Store Alliance, evidence was funded (secretly) by John Lewis, Safeway and Boots; all

stores with a presence in the Nag's Head shopping centre." A Sainsbury's spokesman said: "We are disappointed that these companies felt that they had to take this action covertly. The considerable number of local people in Holloway who were in support of our scheme have thus been denied the chance to shop in a modern, super-market."

Boots this week admitted that it funded the alliance's counsel at the public inquiry. A spokesman for John Lewis, the parent company of Waitrose, which has a store at the Nag's Head, admitted making a "modest contribution" to the legal costs.

In addition to contributions for a barrister, his clerk and a solicitor, funds were also provided to pay consultants whose studies were presented as evidence at the public inquiry. A Safeway spokes-

man said his company had funded such research.

Alan Hedley, of Landmark, Sainsbury's development partners in the project, said: "Such payments by vested interests take important matters out of the hands of town planners and put them in the hands of rent-a-mob."

Nick Jack, a member of the alliance, said its backers were concerned at possible loss of business. He added that some were also "angry that they had invested heavily in branches at the Nag's Head, which, according to Islington's planning guidelines, was supposed to be protected from out-of-centre developments."

Last week, Sainsbury's dropped its appeal against the outcome of the public inquiry, saying that it was working on a second plan for Holloway. Mr Hedley said a new planning application might be presented before Christmas.

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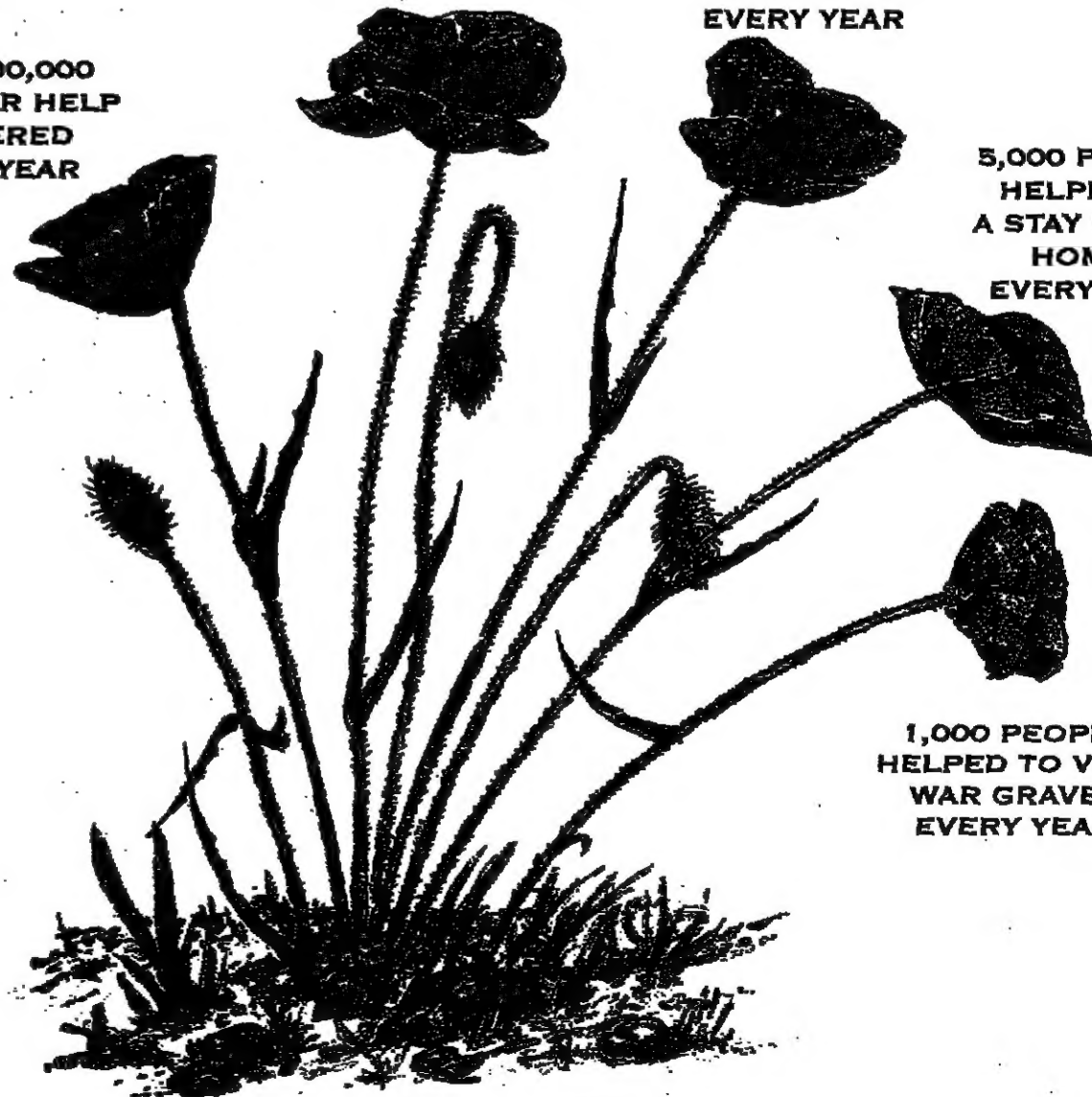
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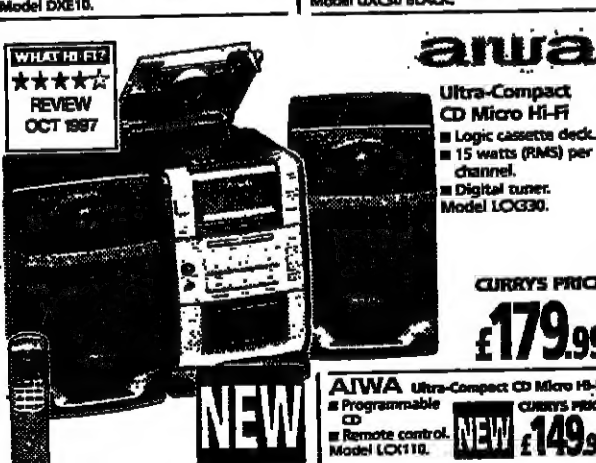
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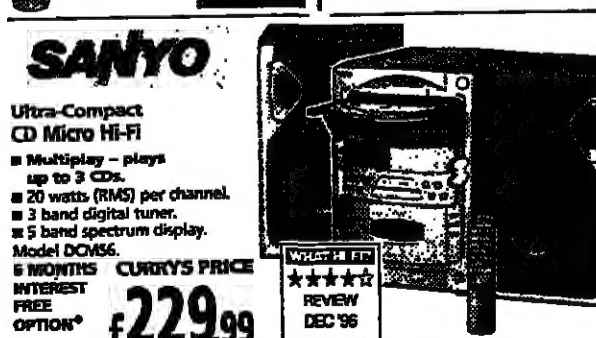
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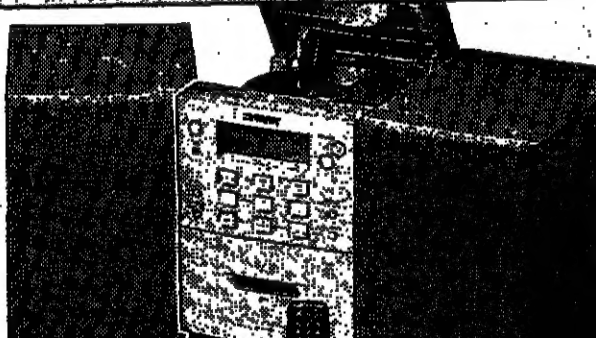
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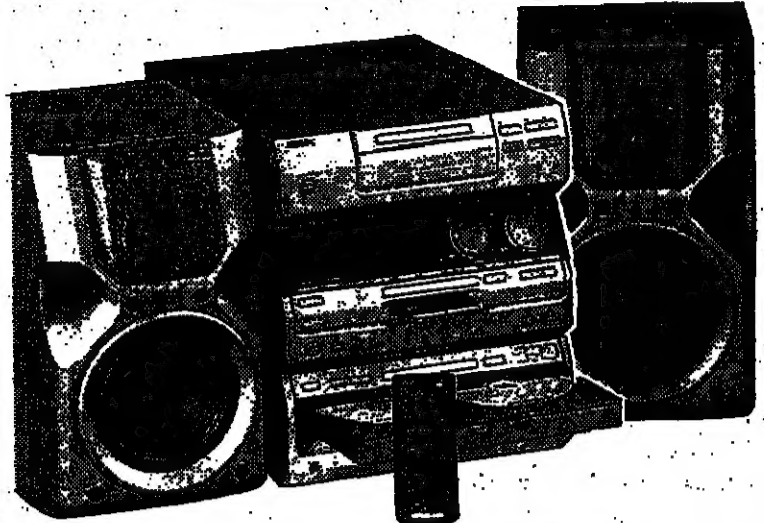
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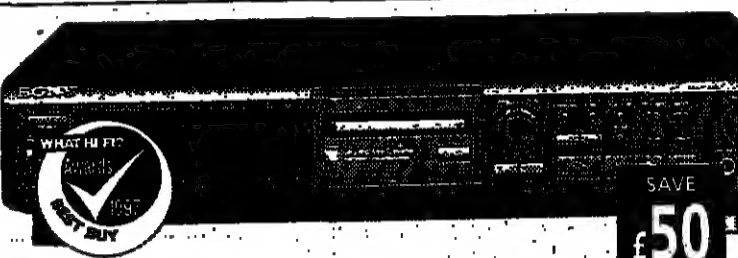
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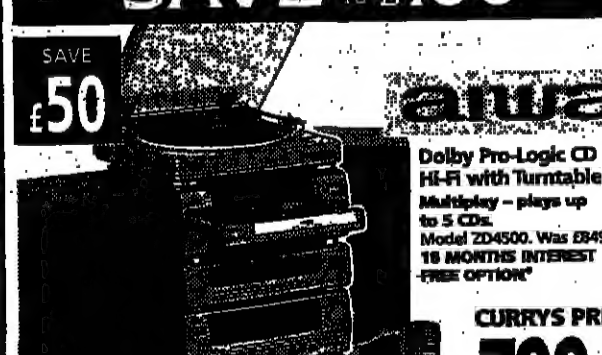
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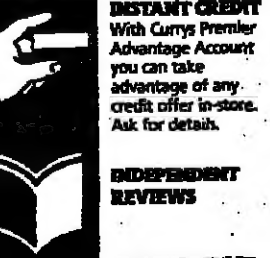
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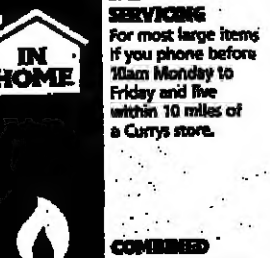
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Rector's w
bishop t

Young golfer
says lawyers
ruined career

CONNECTION
PER PHONE

Rector's wife alerted bishop to affairs

BY RUSSELL JENNINGS

THE Rector of Benllech's wife was the mystery third informant who went to his bishop to complain of his affairs with women parishioners, an ecclesiastical court in Wales was told yesterday.

Gwenda Williams, accompanied by her two eldest sons, went to see the Right Rev Barry Morgan, the Bishop of Bangor, to tell him that her husband was an adulterer who was having sexual relations with Iris Green and Anne Williams.

The secret visit emerged on the fourth day of the Church in Wales's Provincial Court hearing into the alleged "scandalous behaviour" of the Rev Clifford Williams, 49, rector of Benllech, in Anglesey, North Wales.

Mr Williams was taken line by line through handwritten notes and messages left on Mrs Green's answering machine that were alleged to reveal an intimate relationship between the cleric and the middle-aged music teacher.



Enid Williams yesterday was the subject of gossip.

From the witness box, he repeatedly denied that he had "led through his teeth" about those notes and tapes to his bishop, and was continuing to lie to the court about the nature of his relationships with the two women.

Mr Williams, 49, a father of three, is facing four charges of giving "just cause for scandal or offence". He denies con-

ducting a six-year adulterous affair with Mrs Green, 56, who formed a church choir, and Mrs Anne Williams, a church warden.

Lord Thomas, QC, counsel for the bishop, suggested to Mr Williams that it was his wife who went to the bishop in September 1995 to complain about her husband having affairs with the two women. She told him about notes from Mrs Green's diary that she had found in his possession.

Mr Williams insisted his wife subsequently retracted the statement. He said she had gone to the bishop because she was fed up with the gossip circulating. He told the court that he could not remember describing her behaviour to the bishop as hysterical. Lord Thomas asked: "Is your wife still with you now as man and wife?"

"Yes," Mr Williams replied. Entries in Mrs Green's diaries were read out to the court in which she refers to "C". Mr Williams denied that he was "C". One entry read: "I am very tense. I know I need some

good sex apart from a release from C's attentions."

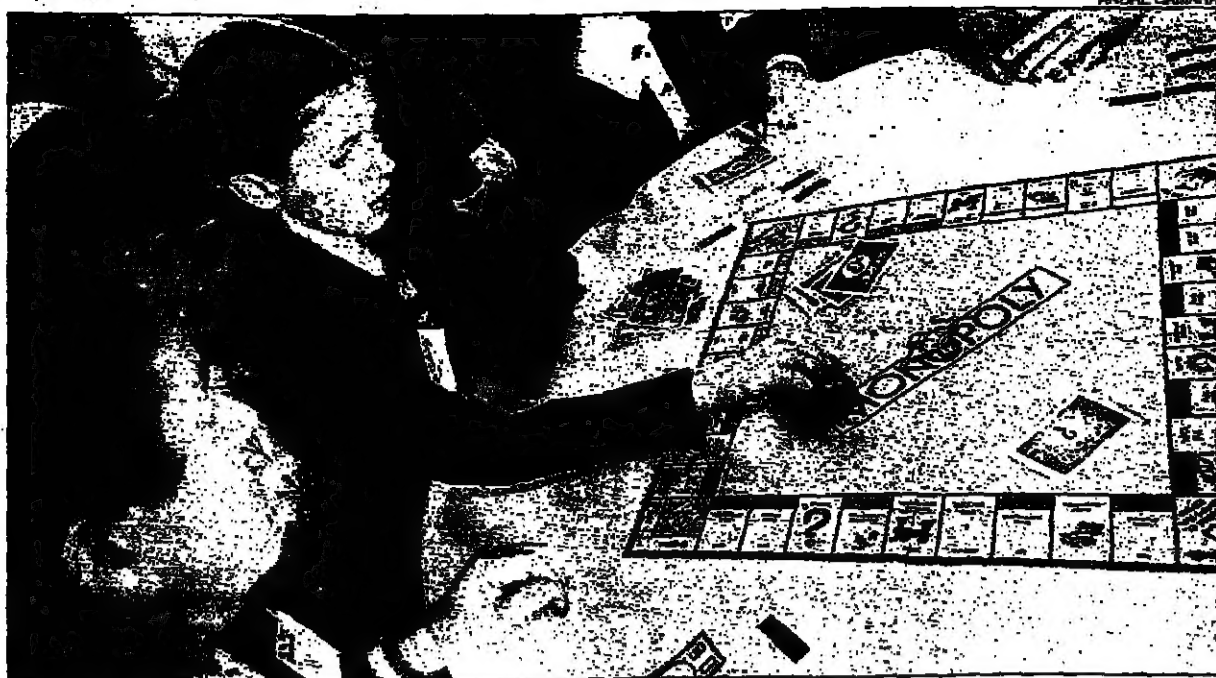
In another she wrote: "What is so worrying is the evident unbalance of C's mind. He doesn't seem to want me. I don't seem to exist to him and yet he is excessively jealous."

Mr Williams said he had been trying to counsel Mrs Green "because she was ashamed of her sexual taste for much younger men and women."

Anne Williams and Enid Williams — with whom he is also alleged to have had a relationship — later denied, from the witness box, any suggestion that they had an improper relationship with the rector. Instead they painted a portrait of Mrs Green as an emotionally unstable woman who became fixated on Mr Williams.

Anne Williams described Mrs Green as a highly strung troublemaker who went on to spread gossip around the parish that Mr Williams was conducting an affair with Enid Williams.

The hearing continues.



Angela Wardill, 11, the youngest player in the 25th anniversary Monopoly tournament at the Savoy Hotel

Schoolboy tycoon sweeps the board

TOP Monopoly players were left questioning their money-making skills after a teenage public schoolboy beat them all to become Champion of Champions in the game's 25th anniversary tournament. James Broomfield, 16, swept the board in the grand final at the Savoy Hotel, London.

Waddington's, the game's British

manufacturer, gathered a host of past champions for the Simply the Best contest.

"I only came here for a joke, because I thought it would be amusing, and my Dad was playing too," said the winner, a pupil at Westminster School, London. "I didn't play terrifically. I'm putting it all down to luck and a few

wise decisions. I haven't played Monopoly for years." His father, John Broomfield, 55, a property developer from Marylebone, played in the first championships in 1972, when he was the unofficial winner. "I'm thrilled to bits that my son has emulated the past successes of his father and is following family traditions," he said. (PA News)

Young golfer says lawyers ruined career

BY PAUL WILKINSON

A TALENTED young golfer was thrown out of his club and blackballed by others in the area after he and his father were accused of cheating, a court was told yesterday.

William Luther, who was 14 at the time, played off a three handicap and hoped to pursue a career in the game. He and his father, also called William, strongly denied having entered a bogus score on their card but South Shields Golf Club decided that they were guilty of "conduct unbecoming a gentleman".

The Luthers are suing their solicitors, claiming that they lost their chance of clearing their names when Hannay and Hannay, of South Tyneside, failed to notify them of an appeal hearing. The solicitors deny negligence, saying that they told the Luthers by telephone.

Jonathan Carr, for the Luthers, told Newcastle County Court: "They have been unable to obtain membership of any other golf clubs in the area. The expression is 'blackballed'."

"William Luther Jr was a very promising golfer who had ambitions to pursue a career in golf. Because he has

been blackballed and without any membership of any golf club he is unable to qualify for a handicap and unable to pursue a career as a professional golfer."

In August 1991 Mr Luther, 50, and his son, now aged 20, were accused by club officials of submitting a card showing a birdie four instead of a par five on the sixth hole. The pair had played their round with a scorer after their opponents failed to turn up.

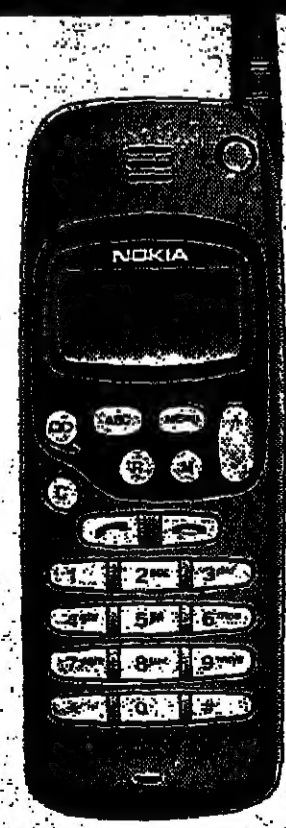
Mr Luther, who had been a member for ten years, called in Hannays when they were expelled. He told the court: "We didn't cheat. I don't know what the prize was, but it would be something like a T-shirt. A sweep of about £7 was about the most anyone could win at the club."

William Luther Jr, who is now training to be a sales manager, told the court: "My ambition in life was to become a golfer. I was only 14 but this really broke my heart."

Mark Dowie, who was the scorer, admitted that he had made a mistake. He said: "I didn't see any cheating. I was tired at the time. I must have lost my concentration."

The hearing continues.

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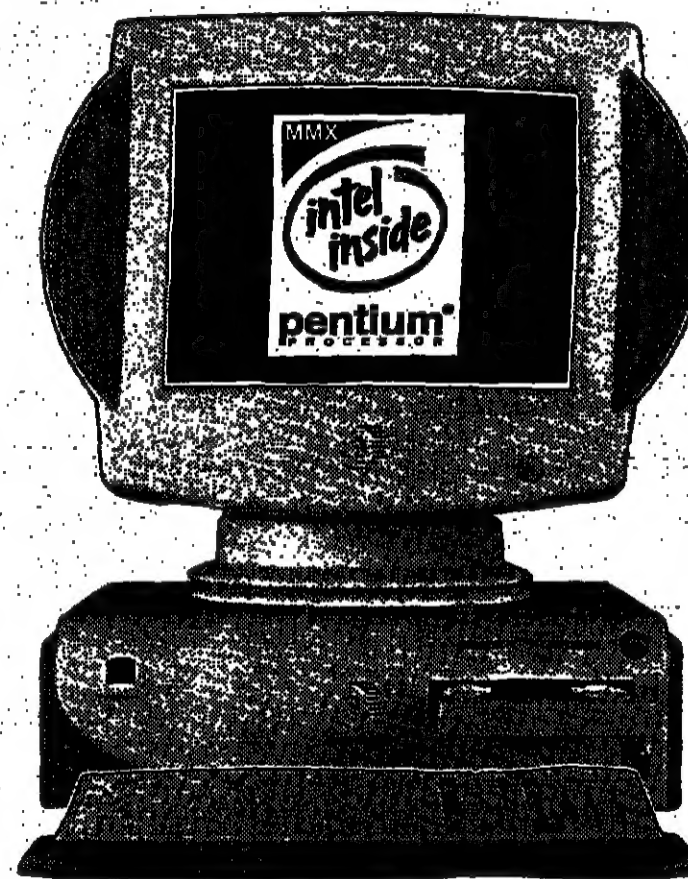
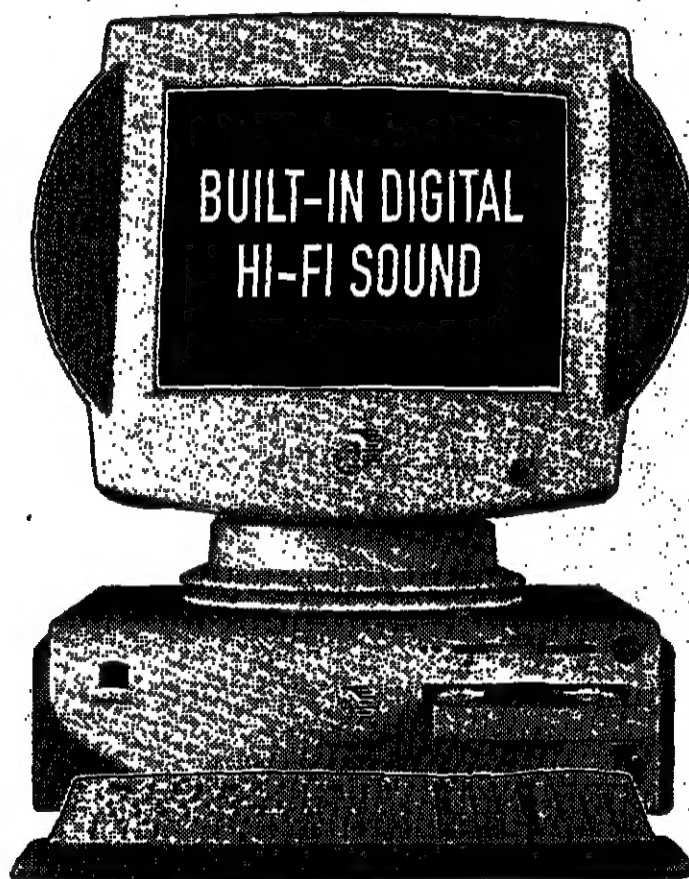
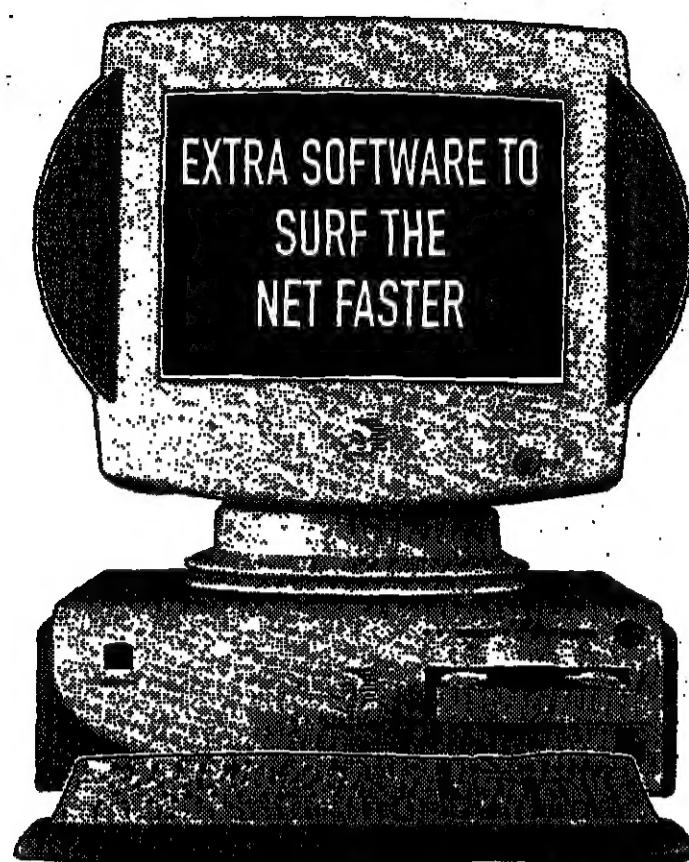
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Indian
allowed
whales

Scientist poin



Indian tribe is allowed to kill whales again

By Nick Nuttall, Environment Correspondent

A NATIVE Indian tribe has been given permission to resume whaling more than 70 years after its members made their last catch. The Makah tribe of Washington State will take to the seas in autumn next year in traditional hand-carved cedar canoes to intercept and kill grey whales.

Scott Smullen, a spokesman for the United States delegation at the International Whaling Commission (IWC), said yesterday: "All of their traditional rituals and ceremonies for whaling, including their hand carved canoes, will be continued. The only thing that will change is the harvesting method, which has become more humane."

The Makah hired a weapons expert who has developed a high-powered rifle to replace hand-held harpoons. The commission, meeting in Mon-

aco, decided yesterday that the tribe should be allowed to kill four grey whales a year. The animals are not considered to be an endangered species: the stock to be hunted by the Makah number some 21,000.

Britain was among the nations that voted in favour, but other countries and conservationists fear that the decision will open the floodgates to more whaling. At least 13 Canadian tribes, blood-related to the Makah, who also abandoned hunts at the turn of the century when stocks collapsed, have indicated they also want to resume hunting.

Patricia Forkan of the Humane Society said yesterday: "There is now a potential for many, many other tribes who claim a whaling heritage to resume."

Makah tribal leaders say that they need to whale to

reassert a cultural identity and to cement tribal ties, which will help to cut alcoholism and crime among young Indians. Those opposed to the move believe it breaks commission rules on so-called aboriginal whaling. The Makah, unlike the Inuit of the Arctic, do not need whale meat to survive and some critics fear the whales may end up on Tokyo menus.

Conservationists also claim that the needs of the modern-day Makah are no different to villagers in parts of Japan who are blocked from resuming whaling on the ground that they are commercial rather than tribal whalers.

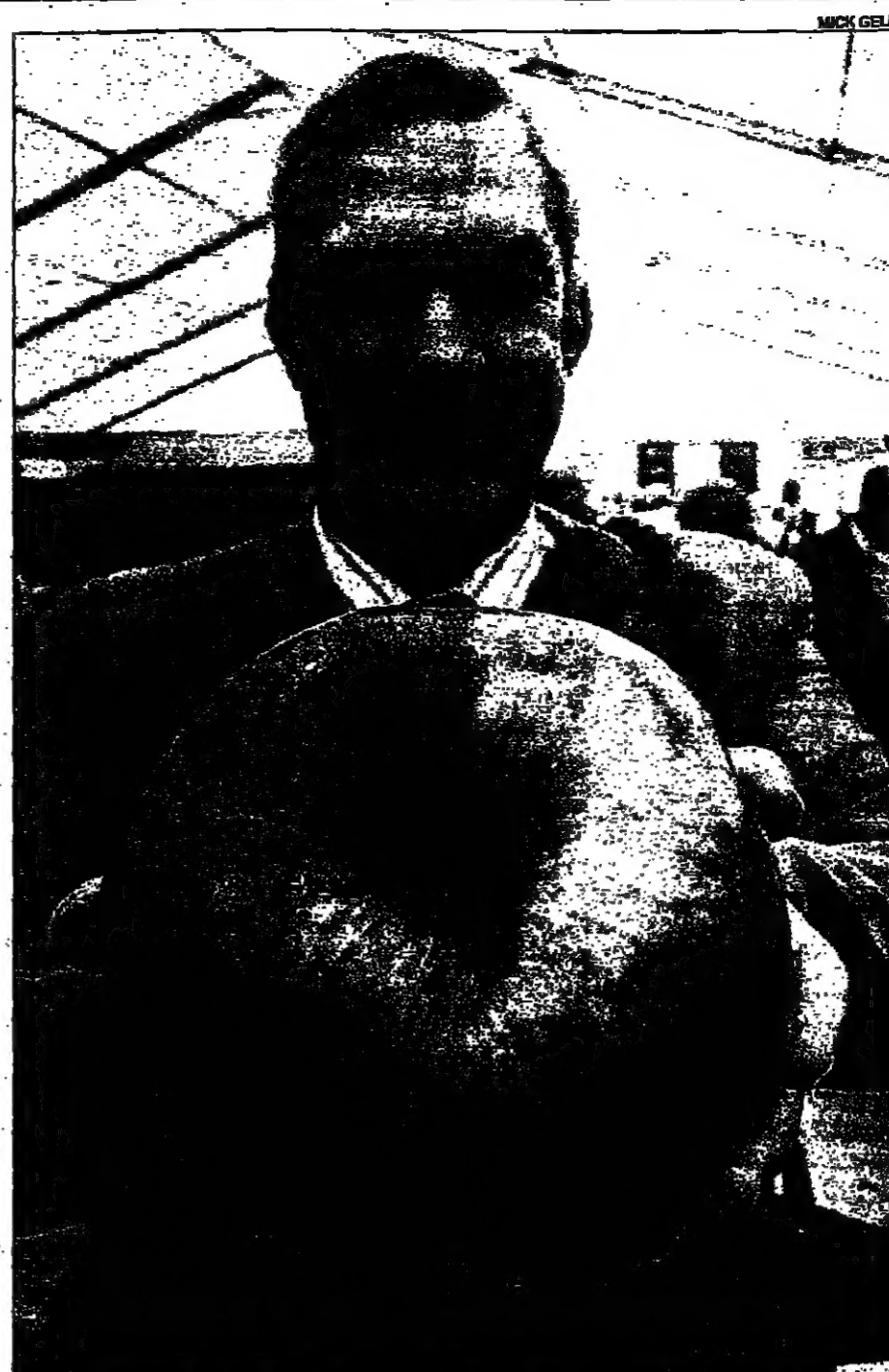
"These are the same whales that Americans and tourists get from boats off California and Mexico. They will now be migrating up past Washington State to be killed," Ms Forkan said.

Mr Smullen said: "The IWC has indicated its acceptance of the US position that the Makah tribe's cultural and subsistence needs are consistent with those historically recognised by the commission."

Concern over the Makah decision has been eased by a reduction, from 140 to 120, in the number of grey whales that the Yupik and Chukchi peoples of Siberia are allowed to take.



Tourists make contact with a grey whale off Mexico. They will be shot as they migrate past Washington State



Alan Smith with his champion Howgate Wonder at the Marden Fruit Show

3lb 11oz apple is world's biggest

By Michael Hobsen

A FARMER in Kent has grown the world's biggest apple, with a girth of 21 1/4 in and a weight of 3lb 11oz. The monster Howgate Wonder comfortably exceeds the dimensions of the current champion, grown in Oregon, in the United States, in 1994. It weighed a mere 3lb 4oz.

Alan Smith, of West Pike Farm at Laddingford, near Maidstone, said yesterday he was "awestruck" by the size of the fruit, which took the top prize in the heaviest apple class at the annual Marden Fruit Show at Detling, also in Kent.

"The apple is the one bright spot in what has been a pretty grim season," he said. "We had very early blossom and then the frost came and killed much of the fruit on the trees. We have been able to pick no more than 15 per cent of a normal crop."

"But the apples that did survive were of unusually large size, probably because of the longer growing season, the reasonable weather since the frosts, and the fact that the trees were carrying fewer apples than normal."

The Howgate Wonder is a cross between a Blenheim Orange and a Newton Wonder and is grown mainly as an exhibition and garden variety.



The mono-clawed Buster

Buster loses his grip on TV fame

By Robin Young

BUSTER the nut-cracking crab has blown his chance of television stardom. A planned appearance on a wildlife show was scrapped after he lost a pincer trying to escape from his tank.

The 8lb crustacean, denizen of the Sea Life Centre in Weston-super-Mare, was due to be filmed for *The Really Wild Show* crushing walnuts in his powerful claws.

But the BBC Wildlife Unit has had to recruit an understudy after Buster's accident. Staff at the Sea Life Centre say the pincer will take a year or two to grow back.

Neil Tredwin, a curator, said: "Buster still has one good claw to feed himself, but television cannot make a star of a one-armed crab. We are very disappointed."

The smaller stand-in, known as Tyson, has been recruited from Weymouth. The show's producers have rigged up a machine to measure the power of a crab's pincers, which are hundreds of times stronger than the human hand.

Researchers from *The Really Wild Show* visited Buster last week at Weston, Somerset, and were impressed by his nut-cracking routine. Staff believe Buster, an edible crab (*Cancer pagurus*), is about 20 years old. His body is 1ft wide and in happier days he measured 3ft between pincer tips.

But before filming Buster managed to climb out of the tank in which he was auditioned. He fell several feet to the floor, snapping off the pincer. Alison Wan of the Sea Life Centre said: "This happens in the wild where crabs bump into rocks and so on." The pincer would regenerate, but only after the crab's chance of fame was long gone.

Scientist points finger at dinosaur ancestry of birds

Nigel Hawkes on a revolutionary evolutionary theory that goes out on a limb

BIRDS cannot be the modern descendants of dinosaurs, one of the world's leading experts in avian evolution has asserted.

The claim gives a new twist to an argument which has appeared to be settled. Not so, says Alan Feduccia of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: there are insurmountable problems with the idea that ducks and dinosaurs are related.

The evidence, gathered by Dr Feduccia's colleague Anne Burke,

shows that similarities between the "fingers" that make up birds' wings and the fingers of dinosaurs are superficial and the two evolved from an older common ancestor.

Dr Burke examined early limb development in ostriches, chickens, crocodiles, alligators and turtles. In *Science* magazine, she and Dr Feduccia report that there are important differences between these

creatures and what is known about dinosaur limbs.

"We know that dinosaurs developed 'hands' with digits one, two and three, which are the same as the thumb, index, and middle fingers of humans, because digits four and five remain as tiny bumps or vestiges on early dinosaur skeletons," says Dr Feduccia. "Apparently, dinosaurs developed a very

specialised, almost unique, hand for grasping and raking. Our studies of bird embryos, however, show that only digits two, three and four develop, and this creates a new problem. How do you derive a bird 'hand' with digits two, three and four from a dinosaur hand that has only digits one, two and three? The answer is that you can't."

The similarity in the bone struc-

ture that makes dinosaurs and birds look the same is therefore the result of convergent evolution, in which both groups developed similar body designs for walking upright and began to resemble each other.

This interpretation is strengthened, in Dr Feduccia's opinion, by the fact that the superficially bird-like dinosaurs appeared between 30 million and 80 million years after

Archaeopteryx, a Jurassic fossil bird. In addition, he says, "flesh-eating dinosaurs thought to have given rise to birds were large, Earth-bound creatures with heavy balancing tails and short forelimbs."

In a commentary in *Science*, Dr Richard Hinchliffe of the University of Wales, Aberystwyth, says that the supporters of a dinosaur origin for birds will not like the new evidence. But it is, he says, "the most important barrier to belief in the dinosaur-origin orthodoxy".

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THE TIMES FRIDAY OCTOBER 24 1997

Whitehall staff get flexible friends

Valerie Elliott on a scheme to save taxpayers millions by giving civil servants credit cards

GORDON BROWN has decided to credit civil servants with common sense in a scheme to cut unnecessary paperwork and save millions of pounds a year.

The government tradition has always been for staff to waste time on countless order forms, estimates and phone calls before being authorised to buy even the most inexpensive office materials. The process can inflate the cost of a 98p padlock to more than £70.

Now the officials are to be given Visa cards and trusted to get on with the job.

The credit card scheme means that Mr Brown, the Chancellor, could have a new wastepaper basket for about

£15 — a saving of £35 on the old system, which required three estimates before an order could be placed and several stages of approval before a cheque could be made out and signed.

The scheme was announced yesterday by Geoffrey Robinson, the Paymaster-General, who believes that it will save £60 million a year. The Treasury was forced to take action after the National Audit Office identified so much red tape that many items were costing more than 50 times their list price. Mr Robinson is confident that the credit cards will end the scandal of the high administration costs.

There are plenty of safeguards in the system to deal with any civil servant who might prefer to fly off to the Bahamas or go on a shopping spree with a government Visa card. Most of the cards will have a £500 limit, and anyone who is found to have used one for personal purchases will face the sack.

There will be no Air Miles, or any other such benefit, to be taken advantage of by officials spending government money. A Treasury rule forbids any personal gain.

The decision to end the Whitehall paper chase will not just save money but will give staff more time to check that they are buying the right goods at the best price. Yesterday, Mr Robinson said that the idea was not to make staff redundant, but to improve the efficiency of purchasing sections in every government department and agency. The credit card system will also help to fulfil Labour's manifesto to ensure prompt payment to government suppliers.

Mr Robinson said: "Buying essential small items has long been a cause of frustration and waste for the Government. In the old system orders were made and paid for through a time-consuming and expensive system of individual orders. This could cost £70 or more even though the goods involved cost less."

"That is an unacceptable waste of public money when modern charge cards offer a better deal. The potential savings, more than £60 million, are obvious."

Ken Bignall, Managing Director of Visa UK, said he believed that the estimate was modest and that many more millions of taxpayers' money could be saved, particularly if cards were extended to other public services, such as the National Health Service. He said that in America about 250,000 cards had been issued to government officials and he expected the number to reach between 50,000 and 100,000 in this country.



I'm afraid we'll need that in triplicate: an archive view of the outdated office ways that Gordon Brown hopes to change

HOW OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN WASTING THEIR TIME

The National Audit Office recommended the issue of credit cards to civil servants after uncovering the following procedure for purchasing inexpensive items.

- Requisitioner identifies requirement, obtains three quotes and completes requisition form (time taken 60 minutes).
- Delegated budget-holder reviews requirement and gives approval (10 minutes).
- Commodity manager reviews and endorses the requirement (10 minutes).
- Local purchase officer receives request,

registers details, checks three quotations, completes order form, matches paperwork when received and informs requisitioner of arrival (90 minutes).

- Accounts officer receives invoice, inputs on to accounting system, returns payment and requests approval form (10 minutes).
- Delegated budget-holder authorises payment request (10 minutes).
- Accounts officer completes cheque form and dispatches payment (10 minutes).

Total time spent: 3 hours and 20 minutes.

Foreign child 'given away' can be adopted

By Richard Ford, Home Correspondent

A CHILDLESS couple yesterday won the right to adopt a child who had been brought from Pakistan for them to bring up as their own son.

The boy, 8, faced deportation after the couple entered into a secret arrangement with relatives in Pakistan, who brought him to England, but did not disclose that he was to be adopted.

The Court of Appeal overturned a High Court ruling refusing the couple an adoption order. The High Court had said that allowing the adoption would "condone an entry" that was gained without the full facts being given to the immigration authorities.

But the Appeal Court judges granted the adoption order after being told that the family in Pakistan had "gifted" the boy to the childless couple from London.

Lord Justice Thorpe said the

case involved an arrangement between "a fertile and an infertile couple". The boy's natural father, 43, was a cousin of the 45-year-old man who wanted to adopt the boy. In 1988 the London couple had been told by doctors they could never have children.

The judge said that the "gifting" of a child was a religious custom recognised in many parts of the world. "It seems to me that we should respect that custom, founded as it is upon a humane response to a sad deprivation."

The couple from England went to stay in Pakistan with the boy for the first 33 months of his life, and then his father and mother applied in Pakistan for entry for a two-week holiday in England with their children. They did not disclose the real purpose of their visit or that they would be staying

with the London couple. When they arrived in England in 1994 the boy was put into a local school, his name deleted from his mother's passport, and the husband and wife applied to adopt him. His natural parents returned to Pakistan and he has not seen them since.

The adoption application went to the High Court where there was a two-day hearing involving the husband and wife, Official Solicitor and a Home Office representative.

Lord Justice Thorpe said that despite the contravention of immigration rules of children for adoption, Mr Justice Singer in the High Court had been wrong in deciding that to grant an adoption order, with all its benefits for the child, would be condoning an entry, "the permission for which was obtained without proper disclosure".



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Zeroual's zombies cast vote

Anthony Loyd in Algiers finds fear and disillusion in a nation robbed of its hopes

TORTURE leaves marks on a man's face that time does little to erase. It is 42 years since French interrogators in Algiers' infamous Serkadji prison strapped wires to the guerrilla's tongue and genitals and started cranking the generator handle, alternately forcing his head into a tub of water, pulling him out each time as he lost consciousness.

Half a lifetime on and you can see it all: although only 60 years old now, the lines are like ravines across his skin and there is something broken in his eyes.

"It was actually a passage of initiation for me," he says, "my entry to the liberating army that eventually threw the French out of Algeria." In the present climate of fear in Algeria, where society appears so penetrated by either government or Islamic informers, he wants to remain anonymous.

"I was arrested in 1955, and tortured over a period of six months before escaping and joining the ALN. I became an officer after two years, fighting the French in the mountains for the freedom of our nation until our victory in 1962."

The ALN, the National Liberation Army, was the guerrilla movement whose leaders came to power after the French departure, an old guard who have held total power in the state up to now.

Yesterday's elections in Algeria, the last stage in the so-called democratisation process, should have been a highlight in the veteran's life, a personal reward for his suffering in a past era.

"Freedom, both for our nation and society, was all I fought for," he says. "Most of my comrades were killed in action with the French, though a lot died at the hands of fellow Algerians later. We did terrible things, and terrible things were done to us. Nobody took prisoners and castration and torture were the normal fate for those captured. Yet we were united by solidarity, brotherhood and the desire to liberate our people."

He is an outsider. A multilingual philosopher with an



A policeman patrolling the streets of the Casbah in Algiers yesterday as people voted in municipal polls. The security presence was high but voter turnout low in the latest phase of Algeria's democratisation process

American engineering degree, he lives in a state where illiteracy is 61 per cent among the young. Yet he shares with the youth of the capital complete disillusionment with the administration, his erstwhile companions, and the future of his country.

"I have watched all we fought for turn into the 'zombification' of our nation. The hope for our people now is less than it was under the French."

Like many Algerians, possibly the majority, he accuses the Government of President Zeroual of complicity in the latest outrages.

"The Government aids this present conflict. The GIA [Armed Islamic Group] terrorists are a weapon used by the authorities to justify the absolute power of the army here, as well as discrediting the opposition Islamic parties. They do not perpetrate the massacres themselves, but they do little to stop them and use them as a reason to oppress any voice of criticism."

"I should know — many of the people in power now are personal acquaintances. On a

personal level, I still believe in what I fought for, against the French. On a political level, if I had known my efforts would lead Algeria to the state it is in today I would never have bothered."

The man is not alone, even among officers still in the army, to cast doubt on the Government's agenda. Yesterday's elections were a token:

limited to municipal control. Power is firmly in the hands of President Zeroual. The poor turnout at the polls reflected a deep dissatisfaction with a political process which most Algerians believe is window-dressing for the international community.

In no other sense of conflict

have I seen people so afraid to speak their minds to a foreigner. This fear is not eased by the constant presence of armed plainclothes "minders" who shadow almost every move of foreign journalists.

One officer, who had just left the army on account of the severity of wounds in an ambush, said he was not even sure who his men were fighting on operations.

"Sometimes we fought an element who were definitely one type of GIA, sometimes we fought people who were another type of GIA. They all had different agendas and the only thing they usually shared was a brand of Islam and hatred for the Government. Sometimes we fought people of no particular definition at all. It was never concrete, neither their agenda nor ours."

"You could get to the bottom of it all and find there is nothing there. Who knows? These elections are nothing, a cruel joke. Everyone with any opportunity leaves as soon as possible. It is not that our suffering and bloodshed will get worse immediately, only that it will never change."



President Zeroual leaving a voting booth in Algiers yesterday after casting his ballot

Russia putting profits before honour

FROM RICHARD BEESTON IN MOSCOW

RUSSIA'S first post-Communist generation has rejected popular Soviet-era professions so decisively that more teenagers would prefer to work as gangsters and prostitutes than cosmonauts.

A survey of 1,000 high school students revealed that the majority will reject traditional Soviet jobs as soldiers, engineers and teachers. Instead the findings, released by the VSIOM polling centre, showed that most young people wanted work that would pay well. The 16-to-17-year-olds questioned said the most respected profession was accountancy, followed by law, banking and business.

Out of a list of 36 professions, engineering, once the mainstay of Soviet industry, came only 32nd, while only 1 per cent said that they regarded a career in the military as prestigious. The job described as "killer, racketeer and mafioso" came 18th, alongside sports. Prostitution came 24th, equal with teaching and skilled labour.

Certainly, outside School Number 591 in central Moscow, the findings did not provoke any surprise yesterday afternoon. Pupils laughed when asked what they thought of a career as a cosmonaut, once the dream of every Soviet child, but which ranked last in the opinion poll. "I suppose when you are little you might want to be a cosmonaut," said Naina, 14.

"But who wants to hang around in space for months on end. It is a waste of time."

Mr repairs: Cosmonauts on the space station. Mr reconnected two solar panels damaged when an out-of-control cargo vessel rammed the Spektr module in June, ground control said. (AFP)

Ailing Papon taken for hospital tests

Bordeaux: The trial of Maurice Papon for crimes against humanity in France during the Second World War was suspended until Monday after he was taken to hospital with bronchitis, Judge Jean-Louis Castagnede said yesterday.

The judge said doctors told him that the former minister, 57, who had a triple heart bypass last year, was undergoing tests, and his condition would not allow him to be in court "either today or tomorrow". (Reuters)

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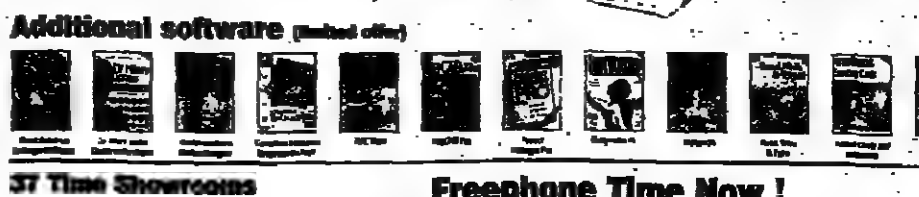
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Ecstatic crowds welcome victor to Brazzaville

HYSTERICAL with joy, an elderly woman fell to the muddy ground, shaking flowers at the feet of Congo's rebel general, as crowds poured onto Brazzaville's devastated streets yesterday to celebrate his arrival back after five months of fighting.

The Congo's presidential palace has been wrecked and burnt by looters and troops but, having been the country's head of state for 13 years, General Denis Sassou-Nguesso's own palatial compound was more than adequate for his return to the country's leadership.

He will be sworn in as President for the second time tomorrow, having taken with a gun what he failed to win through the ballot box in 1992, when he gained only 17 per cent of the vote.

Yesterday his support in Brazzaville appeared genuinely enthusiastic as several thousand civilians who had crept back to the city from the countryside, where they had been sheltering from bombs and shells, ignored torrential rain to cheer his arrival.

The former colonial power, France, announced in Paris that looting continued in the oil and economic capital of Pointe Noire, where General Sassou-Nguesso's forces were

A former dictator has regained by the gun what he lost by the ballot, writes Sam Kiley

reported to be holding 16 foreign nationals — French, Belgian and Russian citizens — on suspicion of helping Pascal Lissouba, the deposed President, during the four-month conflict.

General Sassou-Nguesso, 54, a former Marxist who ruled as a military dictator from 1979 to 1992, said that he would soon form a "broad-based, transitional government" and immediately opened dialogue with representatives of several political parties. He refused to say how long the transition would last, stating only that this would be decided once the government took office.

"We fought the enemy and we have won, the criminals fled. Now we have to get Brazzaville back on its feet, we must restore brotherhood, we must work together and listen to each other. Congo must

become what it used to be," he told thousands of supporters.

Attempts to disarm his Cobra militia before elections scheduled for July sparked the civil war which has bitterly divided Congo-Brazzaville. General Sassou-Nguesso's northern Bambochi people lined up against the Bambochi of Mr Lissouba and the Bakongo supporting Bernard Kolélas, his Prime Minister. The last suffered severe casualties when Angolan troops came to General Sassou-Nguesso's aid and crushed Congolese government forces in Brazzaville and Pointe Noire last week.

General Sassou-Nguesso's forces still depend on the Angolans who yesterday secured the capital for his arrival and have been fighting beside his Cobra militia in the south of the country. This will be the biggest testing ground for his new government. Resistance remains strong just 60 miles south of Brazzaville.

On Wednesday, 19 out of 20 men from a Cobra unit known as "Mobile One" were ambushed and killed on the main route south. Soon afterwards, two insurgents struck 20 miles from the city centre and attempted to blow up two vehicles captured by Cobras. Men under a Captain Theo



Denis Sassou-Nguesso waving to supporters on his return to Brazzaville yesterday as Congo's leader. He is to be sworn in tomorrow

who has adopted the *nom de guerre* "Lucifer" tried to pursue the insurgents. But tall elephant grass obscured the path. The incident demonstrated how easy it will be for Mr Lissouba's troops to destabilise the regime of their long-standing foe.

Mr Lissouba, who defeated General Sassou-Nguesso in Congo's first multiparty election in 1992, has gone into exile

in Burkina Faso but has yet to concede defeat.

"We will clear them all out. There will be no prisoners. We will kill them," said Captain Lucifer. General Sassou-Nguesso said: "Our first tasks will be reconstruction. Through that we will achieve reconciliation. There is so much devastation that we will need carpenters, builders and electricians from all sides to

help rebuild the country." The authorities in the neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo, the former Zaire, have prohibited river traffic from Kinshasa to its near neighbour, Brazzaville, "for security reasons". Mwemba Kongolo, the Interior Minister, has ordered that the ban will be imposed indefinitely, the officials said, citing an internal document.

Although the border formed by the Congo River between the two countries has been officially closed since President Kabila seized power in Kinshasa in May, motor boats and barges had regularly carried food and goods to Brazzaville. General Sassou-Nguesso has yet to be recognised by President Kabila.

The crackdown on river traffic stranded on the Kinsha-

sa side of the river several journalists and photographers who had been hoping to cover General Sassou-Nguesso's official return to power tomorrow.

□ Kinshasa: Twelve people were killed and many injured in the crash of a north-east-bound train from Matadi in the Democratic Republic of Congo to the capital, Kinshasa, state radio reported. (AFP)

Life in the Asian smog 'like smoking 600 a day'

FROM A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT IN JAKARTA



The Petronas Towers in hazy Kuala Lumpur

THE DENSE smog over Singapore and many parts of Indonesia has reached record levels and is now so severe that it is equivalent to smoking 600 cigarettes a day.

As visibility yesterday dropped to less than 15 yards in many areas of Sumatra and Kalimantan, and little more in Singapore, health officials said that they had recorded pollution levels of more than 6,000mg per cubic metre.

Dr Keith Bentley, a World Health Organisation consultant in Jakarta, said: "If you use a yardstick of ten cigarettes per 100mg, a pollution level of 6,000 is equivalent to smoking 600 cigarettes a day." It is worse now because most of the fires are being caused by burning peat, which emits more noxious fumes, and damp wood, which gives off more smoke.

Dr Bentley said that while asthmatics, the elderly and the

very young would experience short-term problems, it was unlikely anyone would suffer permanent health damage. Although having said that, we have never really seen the readings this high before, so we do not quite know what the effects will be.

The thick smoke yesterday also prevented Singaporean authorities from scanning the island's worst oil spill, which was caused by a collision between two tankers eight days ago. The 25,000 tonnes of leaked oil have spread north to Malaysia and south to Indonesia.

Only five people have reportedly died from haze-related ailments, but the smog is being blamed for a riverboat collision in Kalimantan this week in which 28 people died, and for the Garuda Airbus crash last month in which all 234 people on board were killed.

Smoke-free cigarette developed

FROM JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK

A "SMOKING" system that uses a hand-held box fitted over the end of a cigarette to eliminate smoke and ash has been developed by the largest tobacco company in the world.

Philip Morris, which makes such brands as Benson & Hedges and Virginia Slims, spent \$200 million (£123 million) and five years on secret research to come up with a 4oz "Puff Activated Lighter" that looks like a cigarette holder stuck on the wrong end of the cigarette.

The battery-powered box contains a microchip and eight heating blades that ignite the cigarette only when the smoker takes a puff, and then incinerates the smoke and residue with a miniature catalytic converter in the same way as a self-cleaning oven. To use the machine, the smoker must buy special, slightly shorter cigarettes.

The new product is the latest attempt by tobacco giants to meet public concern about the adverse effects of "second-hand smoke" and is targeted at customers who try to restrict their smoking at home or in a car.

It eliminates the fumes from the burning end of the cigarette, which account for 90 per cent of second-hand smoke, but the smoker will still inhale and exhale smoke from the other end.

Although the "smoke-in-a-box" system has none of the glamour sometimes associated with cigarette smoking, company officials hope the new device may some day become as ubiquitous as the cellular telephone.

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ARMY BE THE BEST

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Self-help therapy on the Fringe

BY MICHAEL BINYON
IN EDINBURGH

THE Commonwealth has grown a Fringe. Well used to the antics of avant-garde artists and publicity-hungry showmen, Edinburgh's latest festival has brought the Sierra Leone Women's Forum, The Women's Support Group for the Nariva Swamp (Trinidad), workshops of climate change, and conferences on planned parenthood. Fifty-one heads of state have been sweeping through empty streets in red Jaguars and earnest moods the Fringe has been a raucous caucus of dogooders and self-helpers.

Opening the Commonwealth for the first time to the army of lobbyists who have honed their noisy messages at UN conferences, Tony Blair has brought the Scouts, the Red Cross, aid agencies, the Prince's Trust and dozens of human rights groups to the staid assembly rooms of George Street. Prime ministers, Presidents and important people in suits are being escorted past gruesome displays of amputation instruments to show what landmines can do.

The last big summit in Edinburgh was the European Union in 1992. This event is more colourful — and disruptive. Armed police have closed the city centre and every hotel has airport-style friskers. So far, apart from rallies denouncing the Nigerian junta, there has been no trouble.

Queen's role as Commonwealth head questioned

BY JILL SHERMAN, CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT, IN EDINBURGH

THE Queen's continuing role as head of the Commonwealth was unexpectedly thrown into question last night as Tony Blair tried to heal wounds over her visit to India last week.

Chief Emeke Anyaoku, the Commonwealth's Secretary-General, provoked waves of alarm when he inadvertently suggested that the British monarchy might not always head the Commonwealth. At a press conference on the eve of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Edinburgh, Chief Anyaoku fuelled speculation about the Queen's future role by saying: "The head of the Commonwealth is,

at the moment, the British monarch." Acceptance of that fact would be one of the key criteria to be a member of the Commonwealth, said the chief. But the words "at the moment" prompted a series of questions which begged further clarification.

Chief Anyaoku insisted that the words held no significance, and that his remarks had been misinterpreted to suggest that the Queen's future as head of the Commonwealth was in doubt. "The Queen is the head of the Commonwealth and remains so. I have no information whatsoever that this is about to end. I think her reign is

going to go on for some time." Asked whether there was any suggestion that the British monarchy might not always head the Commonwealth, he said: "I have made no suggestion to that effect. I did say that one of the criteria for acceptance is this arrangement whereby the British monarchy is the symbolic head of the Commonwealth." But he provoked further speculation when he refused to accept that this meant for all time.

His failure to clarify more fully his remarks threatened to overshadow the opening of the Commonwealth meeting today, when the Queen is speaking at the opening ceremony for the first time.

Buckingham Palace did little to stop continuing speculation when a spokesman insisted: "It is a matter entirely for the Commonwealth. It seems as if it was a slip of the tongue, and that is where the matter begins and ends." It was then decided to cancel a briefing on the Commonwealth conference which was to have been held by Palace officials.

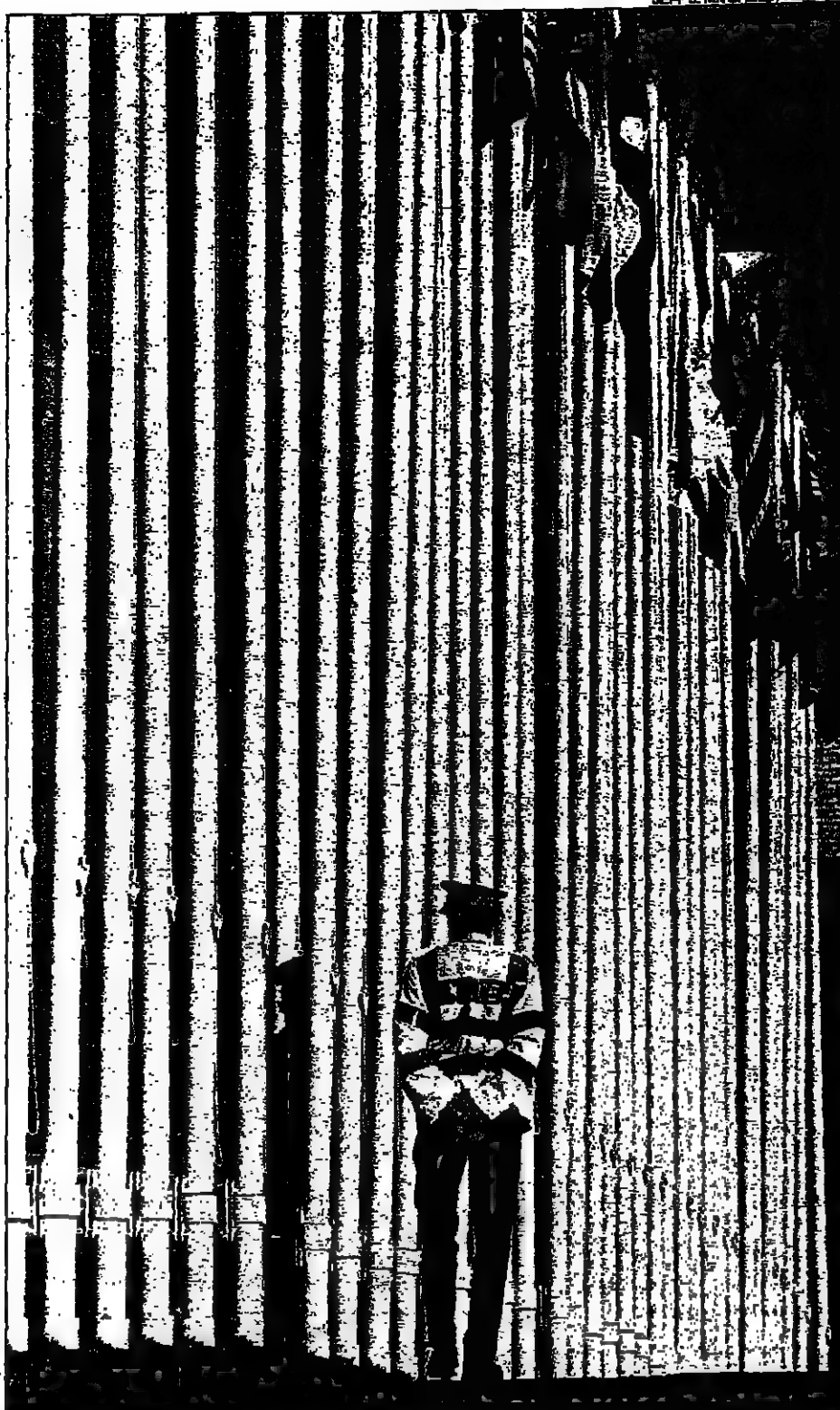
The gaffe will do little to help Mr Blair's efforts to heal wounds over the Queen's visit to India last week. But yesterday the Prime Minister tried to smooth any ruffled feathers over that trip when he spoke to Indian Prime Minister, on the phone for several minutes.

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Macdonald Cycles will be open for business as usual

A bicycle shop next to the conference centre advertises its attitude to the four-day Commonwealth meeting

Leading article, page 21
Photograph, page 24



A police officer on patrol at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre, where the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting opens today

Italy joins Europe's no-border travel club

FROM RICHARD OWEN
IN ROME

ITALY'S media yesterday trumpeted the country's imminent membership of the Schengen agreement on free movement across European frontiers as a sign of trust in its ability to police its borders.

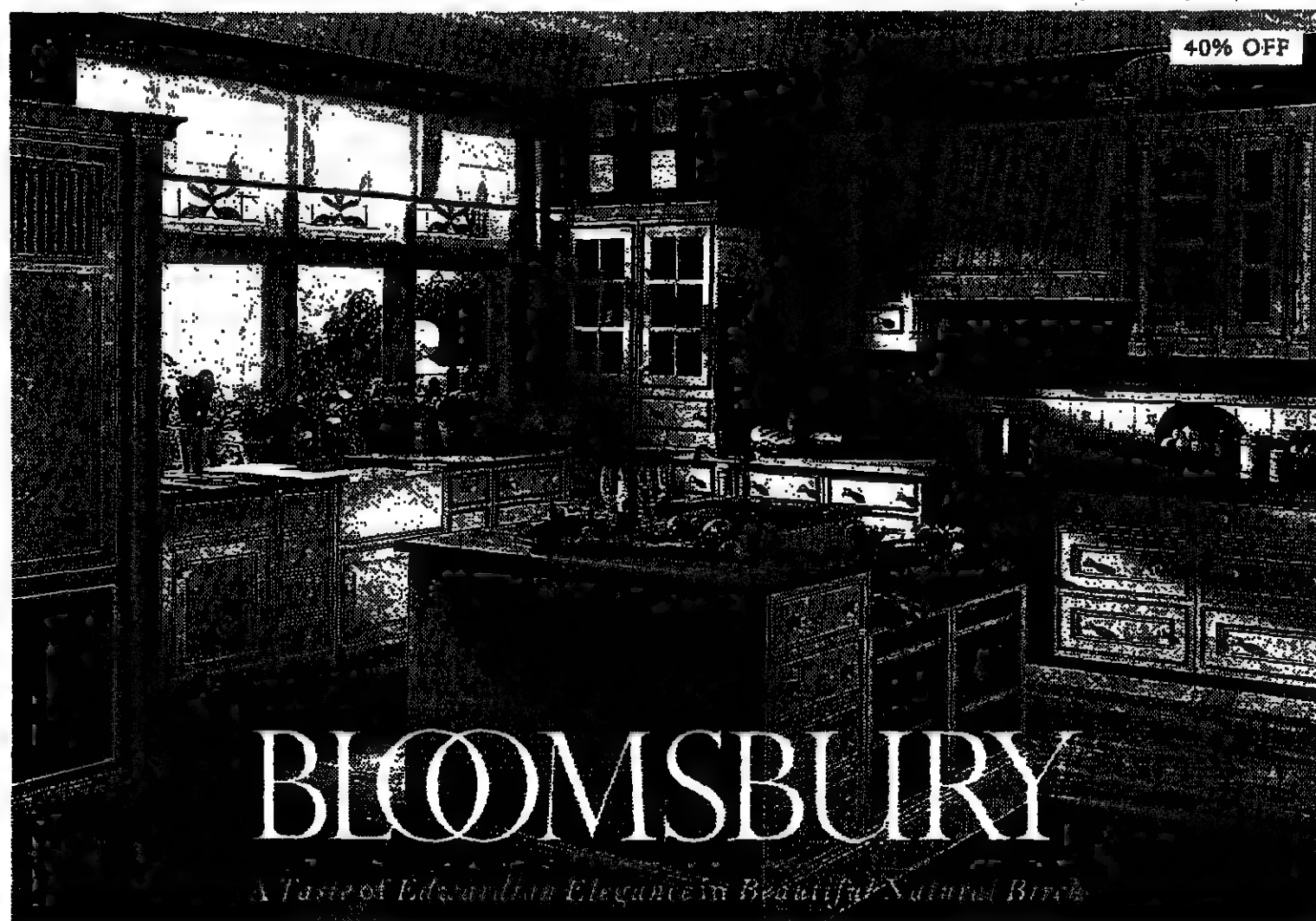
But it acknowledged that move on Sunday would arouse fears of an uncontrolled influx into Western Europe of illegal immigrants and criminals from the Mediterranean, North Africa and Eastern Europe as frontier controls are relaxed.

Britain and Ireland are not part of the Schengen accord, named after the Luxembourg town where it was agreed in 1985. The accord came into force two years ago in Germany, Belgium, The Netherlands, Luxembourg, France, Portugal and Spain. After Italy on Sunday, they will be joined by Austria at the end of the year, and Greece at the end of 1998. Denmark, Finland and Sweden are signatories, but will not become full members until 2000.

"Going to and from Western Europe — except Britain and Ireland — will be like taking a domestic flight from Sunday," said *La Stampa*. Although Britain has vowed to maintain frontier vigilance to combat cross-border crime, there are fears that immigration control will become more difficult, a lesson brought home this week by the arrival at Dover of hundreds of Slovak Gypsies seeking asylum.

Italy's sea and land controls will also be relaxed, and phased out by March. Slovenia and Switzerland are seeking bilateral frontier agreements with Italy to make them Schengen members in all but name.

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Child sex inquiry at Euro crèche

FROM CHARLES BRENNER
IN BRUSSELS

THE European Commission yesterday gave Belgian investigators permission to search the premises of a Brussels crèche attended by the children of EU civil servants after allegations that paedophile acts had been committed on infants in its care.

The Clovis crèche, which occupies a Commission building in the heart of the Brussels EU district, has been under police investigation since June, when parents reported that their children had suffered apparent sexual abuse.

On Wednesday, the Belgian authorities asked the Commission for authority to enter the crèche, which is covered by the "extra-territorial", quasi-diplomatic status enjoyed by EU institutions, a spokesman said. Officials were dismayed that the Belgian inquiry, headed by an investigating magistrate, had taken more than three months to apply for the search. "They had only to pick up the phone," an official said.

The delay in the search request had apparently been because of the bureaucratic path that requires intervention by the Belgian Foreign Ministry and then the Belgian Embassy to the EU. The crèche management declined to comment.

The Commission is indignant over French press suggestions that it had delayed the investigation. Jacques Santer, President of the Commission, wanted clarity over the case as quickly as possible, his spokesman said.

The investigation has focused on two employees of the crèche, which is run under contract by Regio, an Italian education company. The pair are no longer employed there.

The case began after a child psychiatrist advised a couple that their three-year-old child was showing signs of sexual abuse. They approached the police. Other complaints followed.

'Suicide doctor' to offer organs

FROM BRONWEN MADDOX IN WASHINGTON

JACK KEVORKIAN, America's best-known supporter of assisted suicide, stirred up more controversy yesterday with his plan to donate organs harvested from people who die with his help.

"Here's a case where we can end the suffering of a patient and get organs back to save lives," he said. Geoffrey Fieger, his lawyer, said that he would soon make livers and kidneys available through his office.

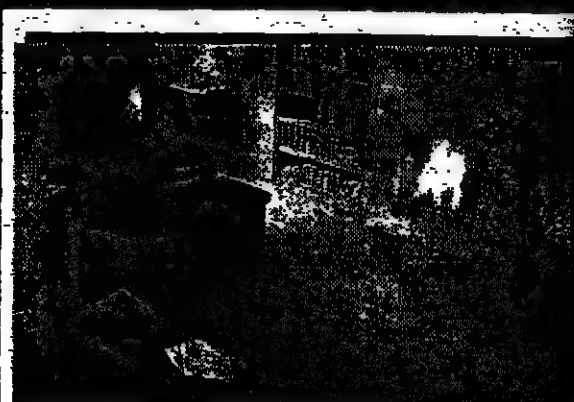
Transplant surgeons said the plan would probably be impossible, as Dr Kevorkian uses carbon monoxide or lethal injections to help people to die, and this damages the

organs. Dr Jorge Reyes, a transplant surgeon at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Centre, said that the plan was "totally unrealistic and almost fantastic".

Lawyers said that it would be illegal for Dr Kevorkian to remove the organs himself, as he says he will do, as he lacks a licence to practise medicine.

Dr Kevorkian, who has acknowledged assisting in 30 suicides, said that a third of those whom he was currently advising had agreed to donate their organs. He said that if US authorities did not allow him to give the organs for transplant, he would export them.

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Tide has turned against warriors of Greenpeace

FROM ROGER BOYES
IN BONN

DELEGATES at the United Nations Climate Conference, dismayed at America's retreat from its promises to curb greenhouse gas emissions, failed yesterday to make the necessary breakthrough for a smooth environmental summit in Kyoto, Japan, in December.

Outside the conference hall in Bonn, Greenpeace, the environmentalist group, mocked the failure of the delegates with a statue of a dinosaur assembled from old car parts, oil barrels and scrap metal. "The dinosaurs died out because of climate change and they could not adapt, Japan and the United States are running dinosaur policies," Bill Hare, the Greenpeace climate policy director, said.

Yet the shortcomings of the climate conference, if anything, are outstripped by the failure of Greenpeace, which is starting to wither as an international protest group. Greenpeace was known for its spectacular actions, such as a campaign against the deep sea burial of the Brent Spar oil rig. No environmental protest, it seemed, could be complete without a Greenpeace supporter chained to a threatened piece of landscape.

Now the group is in rapid decline, even in Germany, the heart of the European ecological protest movement.

In America, which is the largest carbon-dioxide producer in the world should be a prime target for lobbyists, Greenpeace has shrunk. The number of members has fallen from 1.8 million in 1991 to



Greenpeace's dinosaur attends the conference

450,000 this year and contributions dropped over the same period from \$65 million to \$23 million. That in turn has made a big dent in the global funding of Greenpeace International. Around the world, membership has dropped by 40 per cent.

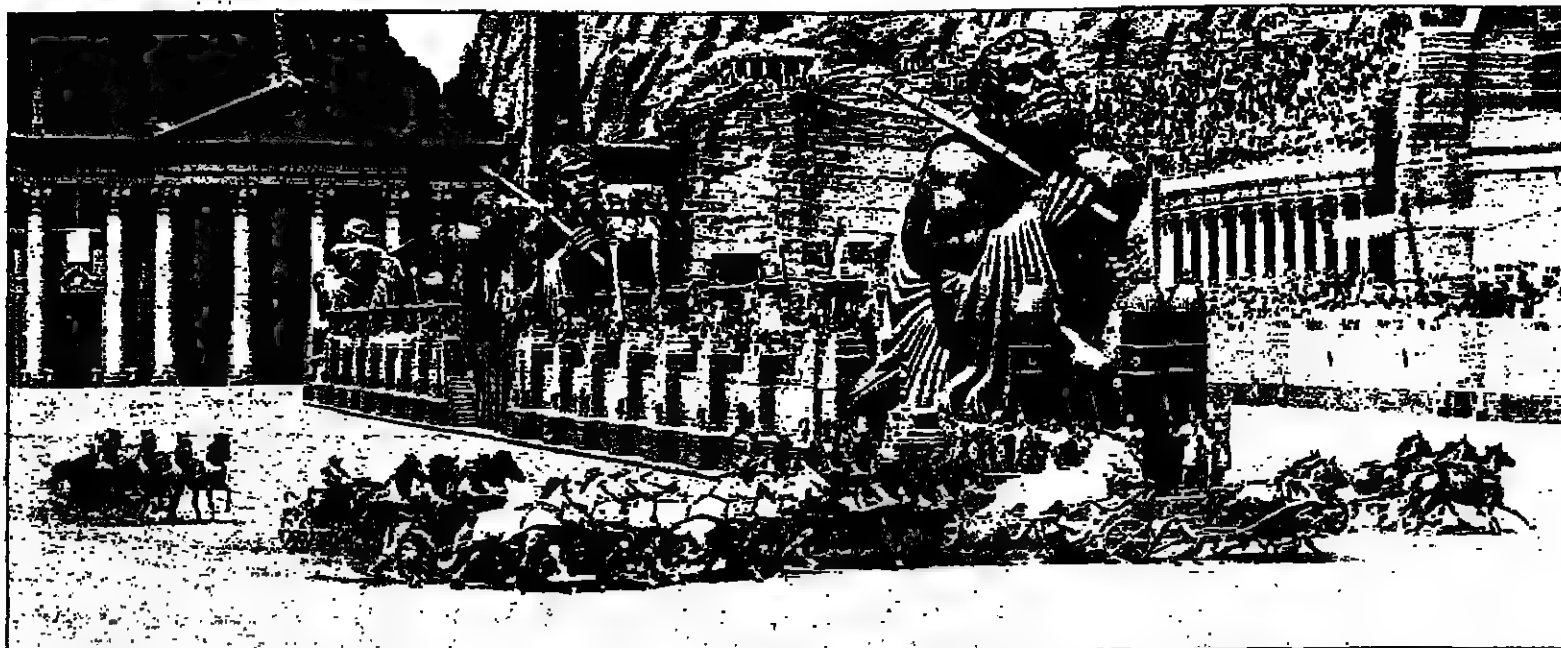
As for the reasons that seem to be driving the Greenpeace crisis, glibly high unemployment in Germany leading to a shift of priorities must be among them: 60 per cent of Germans rated protection of nature as the most pressing political task in 1990. By 1994, 46 per cent shared that view. Last year barely 28 per cent ranked the environment as a top priority. It rates as number 12 in the long catalogue of German worries.

Thilo Bode, chief executive of Greenpeace International, says: "As soon as state subsidies for spectacle frames are threatened, Germans forget

about protecting forests. Their environmental activism is limited to a few verbal nods, a zealous separation of household rubbish and the use of the energy-saving program in their washing machine."

The media, perhaps sensing the change in national mood, are paying less attention to the organisation. The annual press conference of the Amsterdam-based organisation was thinly attended this summer and even Herr Bode admits that the questions from journalists were critical and cynical.

The fact is that governments, as the UN Climate Conference is showing, have taken over some of the rhetoric of Greenpeace, even if they fall well short of the group's goals, and Greenpeace now has to compete with, rather than confront, the political and industrial establishment.



Spectacular chariot races, like the ones run for Ben-Hur, the classic MGM film starring Charlton Heston, will be staged in Roma Vetus

Tourists to be offered replica Rome

FROM RICHARD OWEN
IN ROME

WITH the hard-pressed centre of Rome increasingly clogged by tourist coaches and traffic fumes, a Milan-based business consortium has come up with the obvious answer: a near-life-size copy of ancient Rome in the Umbrian countryside, where tourists can tramp round a duplicate Forum and Colosseum instead of ruining the

real thing. They will even be able to stay overnight and witness a massacre of Christians by lions by way of evening entertainment — courtesy of special effects.

The consortium has bought 360 hectares at Castel Giorgio on the shores of Lake Bolsena near Orvieto, 50 miles north of Rome, at a cost of £10 million. It is negotiating to buy a further 230 hectares for the theme park, which is to be called Roma Vetus

— Latin for Old Rome. The organisers said they hoped to have the park ready in time for the millennium, when the real Rome is braced for an influx of up to 40 million visitors and pilgrims. Visitors will see chariot races and gladiatorial contests and "the massacre of Christians by wild beasts".

The classical buildings on the site, including the Colosseum, the Forum, the Pantheon and the Baths of Caracalla and Diocletian, will be

reproduced in fibreglass, slightly downscaled at three-quarters of their size. Lighting will be by Roman-style torches, and plastic forks and knives will be banned in the restaurants. No cars or lorries will be allowed in Roma Vetus, with carts and litters providing the only transport. Park staff will have to wear togas made only with natural fibres.

Leading article, page 21

Suicide doc
to offer org:

Europe berates US on global warming plan

FROM CHARLES BRENNER
IN BRUSSELS

THE American proposal for reducing global warming gases was subjected yesterday to a torrent of criticism and faint praise, with the European Union leading the charge.

"This is not an adequate response to the global problem of climate change," said Ritt Bjerregard, the EU Environment Commissioner. President Clinton's plan aims to reduce greenhouse gases to 1990 levels by 2008 to 2012. Mrs Bjerregard said that America was breaking its commitment at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit to achieve the

goal by 2000. The EU, setting an ambitious target for the Kyoto climate conference in December, wants these emissions cut in the industrialised countries by 15 per cent below the 1990 level by 2010. Developing countries, including China, Brazil and India, have thrown their weight behind the proposal.

Angela Merkel, the German Environment Minister, said the US plan was "disappointing and insufficient". Britain offered the mildest European criticism, John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, saying that the plan did not go far enough.

Letters, page 21

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OPENING SATURDAY IN CRAWLEY



Pinstripe power



Left: Long black pinstripe jacket, £820, and matching slimline trousers, £230 both by Srenesse, 81 Sicane Street SW1. Tel: 0171-259 5001. Large silver torque by Van Peterson, £275, 184-196 Walton Street, SW3. Tel: 0171-584 1101. Top right: Single-breasted black pinstripe jacket, £312, and matching skirt with side split, £117, both by John Rocha at Liberty, Regent Street W1. Tel: 0171-734 1234. Cream lace shirt, £34.99 by Oasis. Tel: 01685 861986.



Mock croc ankle-strap stilettos with silver heel, £155, by Russell & Bromley, 24-25 New Bond Street W1. Tel: 0171-629 6903. Bottom right: Navy and white pinstripe concealed fastening jacket and matching wide trousers (sold as a suit), £1,350, by Gucci, 33 Old Bond Street W1. Tel: 0171-629 2716. Black eskin boots by Patrick Cox, £170, 6 Synnott Street SW3. Tel: 0171-730 6504. Far right: Brown pinstripe, double-breasted jacket, £265. Long wrap matching skirt.



£135. Brown boob-tube, £35, all by Whistles, 12-14 St Christopher's Place W1. Tel: 0171-487 4484. Grey stilettos with ankle strap, £230, by Gucci (details as before). Silver bean clip earrings, £110, by Van Peterson (details as before). Photographer: LUCY FITTER. Stylist: Nicola Goldie. Hair: Cini Mahony for Shipton. Leighton & Lower. Make-up: Jochen Fuchs. Model: Sara-U at Models 1.

The 1997 **British Fashion Awards**

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Style Editor Grace Bradberry on pinstripe's perennial masculine appeal

Domenico Dolce has said he cannot do without it. Jean Paul Gaultier and Alexander McQueen just can't leave it alone. Pinstripe, perhaps the most conservative fabric ever invented, is the stuff of designers' fantasies.

A well-tailored pinstripe suit — spare, lean and flattering — represents a rare meeting of minds between the showmen of the catwalk and working women. While the vertical lines provide designers with some graphic excitement, they also trick the eye into slimming the figure — that's what most of us look for in a suit.

The perfect pinstripe will have a hard edge, but will also skim the body in all the right places, suggesting the female form hidden beneath the *four* masculine tailoring.

This kind of "girls-will-be-boys" theme was locked off by Yves Saint Laurent in the 1970s. The ambiguity is famously captured in Helmut Newton's 1975 photograph of a model, one hand in the trouser pocket, the other holding a cigarette, standing in a poorly lit Parisian street. The trouser suit, wide-legged, double-breasted, has a bankier's tie in the top pocket, but a soft silk blouse with a bow neck underneath. Cutting-edge designers do not do "blouses" these days, but the idea is the same.

We can thank Tom Ford at Gucci for the revival. Nearly two years ago, his pinstripes — narrow-cut, uncompromisingly chic — caught the eye of fashion editors, and of his rivals. Other fashions have been and gone, but the pinstripe has staying power. Not only is it one of this winter's staples but it's back again in the spring so any purchase can be categorised as "an investment" — two words that can excuse almost any credit-card sin.

On the catwalk, pinstripes came in a bewildering variety of shapes. The Belgian designer Ann Demeulemeester showed mannish flat-front, slouch trousers with loose, broad-shouldered single-breasted jackets. Gaultier's jackets — vast affairs with padded shoulders so wide they collapsed sideways — were teamed with wide-legged pants. McQueen for Givenchy went lean and mean, with sharp shoulders, pointed lapels and a slim fit over the

hips. Fine gold pinstripes provided a gangster edge. Dolce e Gabbana went for a Mafia, grandfather look: with low-slung, flat-front turnups, worn with a crisp white shirt and just a hint of black camisole showing through.

When it comes to buying office-wear, however, you have more straightforward choices. First, skirt or trouser

suit — for once, both are equally fashionable. Skirts come long and split, cheongsam style, or short and split for a Forties look. How short depends on the state of your legs: micro-mini or just above the knee are the options.

This season's trousers come in three basic cuts: long and wide-legged, slouch or slim-legged. Jackets can be little,

nipped-in affairs, long coat-like numbers, some of which can also be worn as dresses, or double-breasted. Jackets with concealed fastenings are the last word in understated chic.

If you can bear it, a pair of spike-heeled boots or shoes will define the aggro-chic appeal of this winter's pinstripe. But be warned: you may have to join a waiting list.

Shall I buy a magazine or shall I treat myself to Vogue?



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War of words over the right to speak wrong

Jason Cowley reports on a forthright new call for a French-style language tsar

When James Kelman won the 1994 Booker Prize many critics were dismayed. Literature gives permanence to language and his novel, *How Late It Was, How Late*, was not only, in the view of one judge, "deeply inaccessible", it was written entirely in Glaswegian-vernacular, a violent, idiomatic language "scorning the conventions of so-called standard English".

There was, of course, a political subtext to much of the outrage, finding an echo in current unease over what Jean Aitchison, Rupert Murdoch Professor of Language and Communications and a former Reith lecturer, has called the "hypothetical" of linguistic equality — the notion that all languages and all dialects are equally valid; that there are no fixed rules and no pre-eminent centre of reference.

Kelman cannily acknowledged this when he defended, in his acceptance speech, his right to speak in his own voice. "As soon as you enter school you are informed that your culture and your language are inferior. My culture and my language have the right to exist and no one has the authority to dismiss it."

Kelman may approve of the emergence of alternative verbal idioms, such as black English, Scots and street English, what Arthur Miller calls "emergency speech", but traditional grammarians are distressed at the way language is being distorted and rules broken. Professor John Honey — whose new book, *Language is Power*, offers a trenchant critique of a liberal orthodoxy that opposes the teaching of standard English and grammar in schools — this week renewed his call for the appointment of a language tsar to uphold standards.

His proposed model would operate in a similar way to the Académie Française, created in 1634 to refine and watch over the French language. He envisages an English academy comprising leading lexicographers and academics such as Robert Burchfield, former chief editor of the Oxford English Dictionary, and Professor Malcolm Bradbury, who would regulate the English language, offering guidance on correct usage.

Professor Honey is confident that "ordinary people" would benefit from having "an authority based not on an individual's irrational likes and dislikes but on the genuine consensus of educated opinion".

While flattered to be considered as a possible language commissar, Dr Burchfield is hostile to a language academy. "I don't think it would work," he says. "You cannot hold a language like a prisoner of war; language is constantly unstable. The English are too rebellious in their attitude to language; they will never conform."

Dr Burchfield feels that the Académie Française is not a success. He mocks its attempts to prohibit the absorption of foreign words and phrases into French and its imperious disregard of the common will. "A couple of years ago the Académie tried to abolish the circumflex accent, but no one took any notice."

But Maurice Druon, a writer and perpetual secretary of the Académie Française, supports the creation of an English academy. The Académie has 40 members, comprising philosophers, theologians, statesmen and academics. It sets the standards of good usage, not only in France but in all Francophone countries.

The académie, according to Druon, "continually revises our *Dictionnaire*, by accepting or rejecting words newly introduced; by updating definitions, recording new meanings and indicating the register of language. It also issues cautions, warnings and judgments. We do our best to induce a sense of sin in those who maltreat the French language."

Do we need such an agency of proscription in this country? In 1712 Jonathan Swift unsuccessfully proposed a national academy for "correcting, improving and ascertaining the English tongue". More recently, organisations such as the Queen's English Society and the Society for Pure English have seized on errors of grammar and pronunciation in an attempt to maintain standards.

Professor David Crystal, grammarian and author of *English as a Global Language*, disparages Professor Honey and his supporters. "A British language academy would be a total waste of time," he says. "If there was evidence anywhere in the world that academies did any good in protecting languages, then one might support the idea. Academies are far too purist and constraining to meet the spirit of an age where language is bound up with notions of identity and self-expression."

He adds: "Even if England did have an academy, so what? Its influence on the rest of the world would be minimal. People like Professor Honey seem to make no concession to the globalisation of English. Only a model that not only recognised the need for intelligibility, and thus the need for standards, but also the place for variety of identities expressed in language, could succeed. Language cannot be controlled."

Anthony Burgess said something similar in his witty survey of spoken English, *A Mouthful of Air*. Languages change, he says, and we cannot stop them changing, nor can we determine the modes in which they shall change, though he concedes that questions of intelligibility are relevant. "It is not even possible to legislate for a language, to say what is right and what is wrong."

"If it is wrong to say 'you was', then the educated men of the 18th century were wrong. If it is stupid to drop one's stitches, then Elizabeth I was a slut. What we regard as errors are often merely survivals from an earlier form of the language."

He is surely right. Languages are made by the people for the people. While the stern prescriptions of Professor Honey are, in many ways, admirable, language must be free to grow and change organically, without the grammar police of an academy constraining it in the straitjacket of convention.



Académie Française, where they say non



Every mother hopes the person looking after her children will be just like Mary Poppins. The reality is that many au pairs lack experience

How to pick an au pair

In the light of the Louise Woodward trial, Matthew Beard looks at how to find an au pair

The case of British au pair Louise Woodward, on trial in Massachusetts accused of murdering a young boy in her care, will cause unease in many working mothers.

Miss Woodward, a 19-year-old from Chester, faces life imprisonment if found guilty of battering and shaking the nine-month-old boy to death. While her defence claimed the death was the result of a prior injury, the prosecution painted Miss Woodward as bitter and vindictive, unhappy with how she was treated by her charges' parents.

Families can find themselves burdened with an unsuitable, ill-prepared au pair; on the other hand, vulnerable girls are sometimes treated as domestic drudges, or even abused by their host families. However, au pairing still has advantages. It gives young people an opportunity to experience a different language and culture, and many au pairs forge friendships with their hosts. Parents often prefer them to nannies because the arrangement is cheaper and less formal.

However, just as the trade is growing — 10,000 girls and 200 boys now come to Britain each year, and a new agency springs up weekly — regulations governing the hiring of au pairs have been scrapped. To cut back on red tape, the last Government dropped the

legal requirement for agencies to register. Instead, an agency is placed under scrutiny only once a complaint has been made. This, say child protection groups, is tantamount to "shutting the stable door once the horse has bolted".

In the US, the Government has responded to parents' fears by introducing tighter regulations governing the au pair trade. Young people applying for au pair visas must show they have had at least 200 hours' experience with infants, 24 hours' training in child development and eight hours' training in child safety.

In the absence of government controls here, a group of agencies set up the International Au Pair Agency (IAPA) in 1995, which is based in South Kensington, West London. The IAPA — which now boasts 65 members — has established guidelines for all aspects of au pairing. It lays out and monitors codes of conduct for agencies, au pairs and host families, and promotes safe and well-organised au pair programmes around the world.

Having seen many of the victims of "mismatches", Jack Corona, IAPA's treasurer, urges parents to avoid choosing an au pair from a magazine advertisement or a non-IAPA agency, which might be less rigorous in checking compatibility.

"Eighty per cent of matches work, the other 20 per cent fail because of incompatibility," he says. "But this can be avoided by asking basic questions at the outset."

When Valerie Renoux, a French law student, arrived at the home of a family in Rochdale, they did not seem pleased to see her.

"After just two days the mother went out, leaving me alone all day without food," says Miss Renoux, 21, who

was placed by a Paris agency. "I stayed at home watching TV until the husband returned. At midnight his wife came back drunk, and they started fighting. I was caught between them, discussing their problems. I really don't think that's my job."

Two days later, the wife and two-year-old baby were thrown out of the house and Miss Renoux went to London, although she had neither money nor a place to stay. "The agency said it could do nothing and the only alternative was to return home. I coped, but I had paid them £90 and they were meant to be responsible for me. But often you can't tell whether the agency is good or bad. It's down to luck."

The lack of a job description and a complaints procedure, she says, means many end up doing more than the suggested limit of five hours' light work a day. "In reality it often turns out to be a lot more. But you can't say no, you have to live with them."

Guidelines for the maximum permissible workload, drawn up by the Council of Europe and complied with by most agencies, recommend that au pairs do no more than five hours' light housework and childcare each day. In return they should get free board and lodgings, one day off a week, plus time to attend language courses, and pocket money of £35-40 a week.

They should be treated as an elder son or daughter not as a drudge," says Mr Corona. "Nor should they be expected to be at home all day long. That's not what the job is about." He says overworked au pairs often run away.

"The parents also have to be honest about their circumstances. If a wife with young

kids is out all day working, then that must be made clear because a girl can be found who doesn't mind staying at home all day, in exchange for evenings and weekends off."

Fiona Beard felt the best way that she and her husband, Martyn, could ease the strain of doing full-time jobs and bringing up three young children was to get an au pair. "We didn't want a nanny, just someone to pick them up from school, make their supper and do light housework," she says.

After advertising in *The Lady* magazine, they hired a New Zealand girl in her early twenties to look after their five-year-old daughter and two boys, then 7 and 11. After a few months, the au pair began to pine for her boyfriend, also from New Zealand, until eventually he also moved into the family's home in Market Harborough. Mrs Beard's first impressions of him were

not good: "He was a layabout whose ambition was to live off the State. The two of them stayed in their bedroom and had rampant sex most of the time."

In the summer they ran away to get married, forcing Mrs Beard to take several weeks off work. The Beards did not discover until several months later, when they were giving a dinner for friends — and after the young couple had left the country — that the pair had financed their wedding by selling the family's silver.

The Beards then paid an agency £250 to find a new au pair, and took on a 21-year-old Slovak girl. "She was very childish," said Mrs Beard, who once found the girl crying under the dining table because she did not have any sweets. She was also traumatised for several days after seeing Mrs Beard accidentally run over a pheasant.

"She was a nightmare," says Mrs Beard. "It has convinced me of the need to vet a girl before taking her on."

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all I buy a magazine shall I treat myself to Vogue?



Philip Howard



All our romantic notions of the raggle-taggle Gypsies-O are Borrowed

Friends and loves, we have none. Nor wealth, nor bliss, nor hope. But the Hope, the Burning Hope, and the Road, the open Road, the Road (Gypsies) are romantic until they park their vans at the bottom of your garden. Then they arouse NOGIMBY. No Gypsies In My Back Yard. So they passed Dover, and the Immigration trumpets sounded a raspberry for them on the other side.

For six centuries the settled peoples of Europe have felt a mixture of phobia and fascination for the Gypsy rovers. Most of us lead routine lives. We get up to shave and take a train, then plod back through the customary signal failures on the Circle Line to shave again. At weekends we mow the lawn and endure the big weekly shop. So it is not surprising that we are occasionally bored out of our grey suits with the mortgage, commuting and the vicarious experience of other folk's news. And so we daydream about the scholar Gypsy who one summer morn forsok his friends and went to learn the Gypsy lore, and roamed the world with that wild brotherhood. We should probably enjoy the discomfort of nomadic life as little as Matthew Arnold would have.

The Romanies are stock figures of the romantic imagination. But the r.i. is inaccurate and anachronistic about their real lives. Today they are more likely to wear shell-suits than exotic though greasy embroidery, and to ride in camper vans rather than painted caravans drawn by piebald ponies. They have always excited literary and artistic interest, usually as heroes rather than dangerous wanderers under the law, likely to decamp with suburban chickens or fair-haired children. In one of the earliest examples of the genre, Meg Merrilies helped Walter Scott's Guy Mannering to recover his estate in Scotland. Two of the most popular heroines of grand opera are Gypsies. Bluet took Carmen from a story by Mérimée, and Puccini discovered *La Bohème* in Henri Murger's *Scènes de la vie bohème*, which was a huge popular success. *La Vie* wrote a learned treatise on Roman music. And Johann Strauss Jr, Franz Lehár and Noël Coward introduced variations of the *Zigeuner* into the classical repertoire and café entertainment.

But the man chiefly responsible for creating the romantic myth of the Gypsy in English was George Borrow, an occasional and colourful correspondent of *The Times*. As with much journalism, readers could not make out whether his writings were autobiographical, fiction or pure fiction. His books are full of conversations in plausible Roman, *Antonia*: "There is a drugstore (royal road) between here and Dover, and you can travel in the birdoche (coach) or with the dromé (Eurostar)." Myself: "Every man must accomplish his destiny, what befalls my body or soul was written in a gabcote (book) a thousand years before the foundation of the world." But *Lavengro* lost Borrow popularity because its anti-gentility tone frightened the respectable classes.

Tracking the wanderings of the Gypsies down the centuries is as much of a detective story as their legendary romance. Most substitutions of "y" for "i" in spelling, as in *syllan* and *gyps*, are far too antiquarian effects. But we should spell a Gypsy with two "y"s to remind ourselves of his supposed origin in Egypt (wrong again). His Greek name, *atsingani*, with its cognates such as the French *gitan*, is the name of a medieval Manichean sect. It is a misattribution. English Gypsy and Hungarian *gyarant* are red herrings up the Nile. The *Rom* in *Romany* refers to the Byzantine Empire, not *Romania*. The language, Indo-European related to Hindi, has a strong admixture of Slavonic and Greek words. Gypsies came from India to Europe in the 14th century.

Centuries of intermittent persecution have done less than EU regulations and the welfare state to make Gypsy existence difficult. They have, however, been officially recognised as a racial group by the Commission for Racial Equality. And their romantic history has inspired their headlines such as "Giro-Cheats" and the false derivation of *gyp*, to cheat. The OED prefers *gee-up*, a dialect word for "to treat roughly". But etymology and history do not stand a chance against the wild Gypsy romance.



"FUNNY HOW AFTER ONE STOCK MARKET CRISIS YOU IMMEDIATELY SEEM TO NEED ANOTHER..."

Don't let us off the hook

Government is about firm decisions. We need an equally clear electoral system

Es war einmal eine Steuerreform. Der Bundesrat lehnt endgültig ab. The tone of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine* headline last Saturday was weary rather than shrill. "Once upon a time, there was a tax reform. The Upper House finally rejects it."

An overwhelming majority of the German people agree that tax reform is necessary. An overwhelming majority of the nation's parliamentarians think so, too. But when it comes to the precise size and shape of the reform, consensus breaks down. Such is the machinery of the German Constitution that this failure of consensus paralyses the whole project, and has done for years.

But I am not expert on the German tax system. My purpose is different: to examine the nature of political decision-making. On the way we must visit proportional representation, but first let us look in on Sir Arthur Conan Doyle...

"Is there any point to which you would wish to draw my attention?"
"The curious incident of the dog in the night-time."
"The dog did nothing in the night-time."
"That was the curious incident," remarked Sherlock Holmes.

In the middle of one small silence may lie the key to a wider mystery. Such a riddle teased me recently when I learnt that many Liberal Democrats are maintaining a curious silence on the question of whether London should have an elected mayor.

How odd. This is a party which yearns to democratise government at every level. Londoners elect their borough councils but the city as a whole is run by dictat from central Government. Putting power in the hands of an elected mayor would offer Londoners two local elections where now they have only one. What Lib Dem doubt could possibly arise on that?

One has been mentioned. A London mayoralty might draw power and attention away from borough councils, in many of which the Liberal Democrats do well at elections, and towards an individual who would usually be Conservative or Labour. The democratic focus would move from councils, which are partly Liberal Democrat, to a man or woman who was — how should we put it — completely not a Liberal Democrat.

An unworthy doubt? Most of a new mayor's powers would have been drawn downwards — from the Environment Secretary. Surely it would be shabby to oppose democratisation out of fear that one's party might not gain?

Perhaps. But it was in that argument — that a mayor is not an assembly — that I found the key to the riddle. Answering the riddle has started me on a logical journey which takes us to the heart of the problem with proportional representation.

A borough council is an assembly. An assembly can be composed of many people, with diverse political affiliations. Depending on the voting system — first-past-the-post or proportional representation — this assembly can be to varying degrees a mirror image of the differing desires of the electorate. An assembly is divisible.

But a mayor is not divisible. You cannot have a 28 per cent Liberal Democrat (or 4 per cent BNP) mayor. You can elect a mayor by any system you like, proportional representation or first-past-the-post, but, once elected, your mayor cannot display conflicting political affiliations — cannot reflect the differing desires of the electorate he serves. A mayor, like a president or a prime minister, is pre-eminently a decision-maker.

Come to think of it, a decision is like a mayor, prime minister or president. A decision — although it may follow consultations with those who hold conflicting opinions — cannot itself reflect opposed opinions. We declare war or we don't; we cannot declare an 85 per cent war on the ground that 15 per cent of the electorate are pacifists. We privatise the electricity industry or we don't; we could not have privatised 42 per cent of it because 42 per cent of voters voted Tory.

We go into the single currency or we don't. We created a National Health Service or we didn't. Frank Field sets up a compulsory second pension or he doesn't. We will keep our nuclear deterrent or we won't. All these decisions can be taken by a prime minister drawn from a Cabinet, drawn from a party drawn from an assembly, drawn from the whole population and elected to reflect the conflicting desires of the voters in proportion to their numbers. But the decisions themselves cannot reflect the conflicting desires of voters in proportion to their numbers.

And the problem about making a mayor "democratic" is precisely the problem about making a decision "democratic". You can fiddle about with the process. Everything about the system by which we get our mayor (or decision) can be designed to mirror the views of the voters whom the mayor (or decision) is to serve; but that democratic process must shudder finally to a halt and pause, quivering, at the eye of the needle, the thing it was all designed to produce: the mayor himself — or the decision. Neither is able to "mirror". To pass through the eye of that needle it becomes necessary to leave many voters behind — "unrepresented".

The act of leadership, unlike the means by which we choose a leader, must always be first-past-the-post. A decision is essentially binary: tick the box, "Yes" or "No". There might have been five good reasons for Yes and three good reasons for No, but if Yes it is, then it is Yes. Completely, not three fifths Yes. Each decision is taken by the mental equivalent of first-past-the-post. The preponderance wins outright. Beaten, the losing arguments are reduced to naught.

This is not to say that every problem requires a one-thing-or-the-other response. There may be a multiplicity of options. But binary reasoning (which is how computers operate) must confront each separately, and ask — of each — Yes or No. If the answer is No, we move on to the next question. And government, in the end, is about taking decisions. You can devise as elaborate a system of proportional representation as you like (the most elaborate would be the inclusion of every citizen in your legislature) but all the process can produce is an assembly (or a president). In Britain we produce the assembly and let the assembly produce the leader; the Americans vote directly for a President; but whatever framework you choose, the path can only lead to the question in Roger McGough's poem: "Yippee, I'm the leader. I'm the leader. OK, what shall we do?"

There is something dishonest about flattery the populace with the assurance that you have devised for them a voting system which can produce an assembly which mirrors the kaleidoscope of their affections, when the kaleidoscope is impotent to translate those affections into decisions. A democratic assembly does not exist to be a big, colour portrait of the nation's political complexion. Opinion pollsters can paint that for us. We may admire the portrait, but an assembly must act.

First-past-the-post usually gives us government by one party and by a unified team. Systems of proportional representation will more often produce government by coalition, as in Germany. Coalitions offer more scope for the vetoing of proposed decisions. To revert to the terminology of binary decision-making, coalitions sharpen more pencils to tick the "No" box. No is (in computer terms) the "default option". In political terms, the default option is "no action": status quo. By using or threatening this veto, those who wield this pencil can achieve one of two outcomes: either No to everything — no action at all — or a final Yes to an option which involves so modest a change that nobody much objects.

Both are, of course, decisions. Status quo is a decision. "Little change" is a decision. And some regard the inherent conservatism of coalition government as one of the selling-points of proportional representation; others decry it as a recipe for paralysis.

An interesting debate yet my purpose is not to pitch in on one side or the other, but to ask a different question. Is a system designed to favour the default option — the "no change" or "little change" outcome — likely more accurately to mirror public opinion than a system which helps a single party, elected by less than half the nation, to bulldoze a decision? Is it more "democratic"?

It is not. "No change" may be the decision for which there was little, or the least, popular support. As the German example suggests, there may be options for change which command much greater public support than the option of inactivity. But if inactivity is the default option in every decision, and every decision is binary, the option of inactivity is given artificial weight in every political culture where the veto thrives.

PR is therefore a cheat on democracy. It would distract us by holding up to us a Parliament which mirrored our opinions, while secretly entrenching the minority whose preference is for indecision.

Matthew Parris

Hong Kong stays cool under fire

Janet Bush on

a stock market as fragile as China

Anxious queues formed outside bank branches in Hong Kong as the stock market crashed yesterday, offering an age-old symbol of financial disaster. But the good people of Hong Kong were not lining up in a panic to withdraw their money to safer deposits under mattresses and pillows. Instead, they were clamouring to switch their savings into higher-yielding accounts as interest rates soared to squeeze the speculators who now have the Hong Kong dollar under the most serious assault since it was pegged to the US currency 14 years ago.

Although there was one sad report of a British banker who committed suicide because it is assumed, of dreadful stock market losses, there seems to be a remarkable degree of sang-froid among the gleaming office blocks of Hong Kong island. The Hong Kong Chinese, capitalists to their fingertips, are worried but not despairing. One fund manager said that most of his colleagues had lost money in the stock market this week but *c'est la vie*, it is part of the game. Anyone with spare cash had been plunging it into the market and had made a packet as it climbed to dizzy and dizzy heights. The market would bounce again, he said. Crashes are cathartic.

Such coolness under fire may prove a touch foolhardy. Last month, when the world's top bankers arrived for the annual meeting of the International Monetary Fund, the miracle economies of East Asia had been torn apart, their currencies devalued and stock markets decimated. But Sir Donald Tsang, Hong Kong's deputy financial secretary, calmly insisted that the crisis was virtually over. He said that Hong Kong's economy was fundamentally strong and was backed by the increasing market power of China. Most of all, Hong Kong had its currency peg against the US dollar, a token of stability accorded almost religious awe which would be defended to the last drop of Hong Kong and China's estimated \$120 billion of foreign exchange reserves.

Hong Kong's currency arrangements helped to see it relatively unscathed through the 1987 world stock market crash and smaller, decades after, Tiananmen Square and the Gulf War. But the impenetrable wall of official confidence that Hong Kong's peg will vanquish the massed ranks of Western speculators cracked a little last Friday. This other model Asian economy had also long defended a fixed party against the US dollar but, despite huge reserves, has now dramatically abandoned its peg in the face of devaluations from many of its competitors in the region. Now even the most stubborn optimists are wondering privately whether Hong Kong can hold out when even Taiwan felt it could not. Some even commit the ultimate heresy and ask whether, if the anchor now threatens to become a source of instability, it should be abandoned.

The Hong Kong authorities are determined to fight for the peg, whatever the cost, because a U-turn now would only deepen the current crisis of confidence. They argue that their local economy is largely immune from competitive devaluations elsewhere because 90 per cent of its earnings come from services. It may be true that Hong Kong does not have to worry too much about price competition for its small range of manufactured goods but its highly prized service industries are extremely vulnerable to a period of high interest rates.

Hong Kong is far too dependent on banking and property, both of which will suffer badly as the stock market takes the strain of the fixed currency policy, to be complacent. Property prices have been outrageously ramped up, the average residential property doubling in value over the past 18 months. Two thirds of companies traded on the Hang Seng stock exchange have some property interests; a third are completely dependent on them.

Overnight money charged to banks was yesterday quoted at 300 per cent. Carry depositors may be queuing up to take short-term advantage but many months of prohibitively high interest rates will surely leave the conspicuous consumers of Hong Kong island, more heavily banked than Manhattan island, looking distinctly ragged.

Despite the prospect of financial ruin for many in Hong Kong, local people are more sanguine about the longer term than foreign observers. There was much angry muttering on the streets yesterday about fairweather overseas investors, abandoning the region en masse because they seem unable to distinguish between troubled economies such as Thailand and Malaysia and Hong Kong, still regarded as the region's glittering capitalist jewel.

So much depends on China, feted at the IMF meeting last month as the pre-eminent newcomer to the global economic stage. Hong Kong is pinning its hopes for the future on being Beijing's banker, accountant, sales and marketing director, port of entry and middle man for the investment billions which are beginning to pour into the hinterland from Western companies eager to capitalise on China's new consumers.

As long as China continues to open up its economy and embrace market reforms, Western money will be attracted there and there is a chance that the funds currently fleeing from the Hong Kong stock market will come back in a different, healthier form. To be allowed to play its role as China's Manhattan, the men who run Hong Kong for maximum profit have to prove that they are good enough capitalists to face the full firepower of the market — and win.

Parents' day

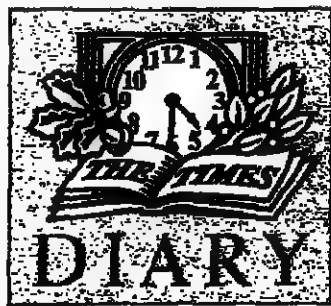
WHEN IT comes to sensitive schooling decisions, Mr and Mrs Blair have learnt their lesson. Who should be seen investigating an inner-city comprehensive yesterday morning but Cherie, sporting for a place for her nine-year-old daughter, Kathryn. When Mr Blair sent his eldest son, Euan, to the grant-maintained London Oratory he faced deep rumblings from class warriors in his party. Defiantly, he also sent his second son, Nicholas, but a new approach is to be adopted for Kathryn, in her last year at an Islington primary.

Cherie was shown around the all-girls Lady Margaret School (old girl: Janet Street-Porter) in southwest London during an open

day. Unlike the Roman Catholic Oratory, Lady Margaret is a Church of England state school. It is not, however, your average comprehensive. Last year 90 per cent of pupils passed at least five GCSEs, making it the top state school in London and the seventh best in Britain. Joan Olivier, the head teacher, approves of up to 15 hours of homework a week. "The girls know that this is a place of study. We push them as far as they can go."

Ms Olivier's strictures work — there are six applicants for every place, and she has to deal with irate parents who fail to whisk in their offspring. Last year 93 parents appealed against her decisions at a four-day tribunal. "Things can get very emotional and nasty as parents attack neighbours with children at the school," she complains. I suspect, though, that Mr and Mrs Blair will have little trouble.

"OK, emission statement"



TRAFFIC wardens would be advised to steer clear of the dandy boxer, Chris Eubank. Arriving at the BBC for an interview, he parked his garish American truck on a meter but declined to feed it. A clamping van hastened to the scene but a device big enough for his grotesquely large wheels, so Eubank was given a ticket instead. This leniency did little to console the boxer. Eyewitnesses tell me that on returning to the vehicle, he turned a particularly unbecoming shade of puce.

Cut dead

SHARING the British Designer of the Year Award this week with his rival, Alexander McQueen, was clearly rather painful for John Galiano, chief stitcher at Chris-

tian Dior. Sooner than collect the trophy with McQueen, who designs for Givenchy, Galiano missed the awards ceremony at London's Albert Hall. His office insisted that he was "busy in Paris". Odd, then, that an acquaintance should have stumbled across him round the corner, drowning his sorrows at a local bar with the equally antisocial frock-maker Vivienne Westwood.

Grounded

STINGY and unpatriotic, officials at Mansion House, digs of the Lord Mayor of London, are refusing to muck in with celebrations to mark the 50th anniversary of the Berlin airlift in 1949. They have refused to open their doors to 400 British veterans of the lift.

"We asked if we could hold a reception there. But they told us they were too short of money, having overspent on VE-Day," says Air Marshal Sir John Curtis, a former airlift hero. "Back in 1949 there was a huge celebratory lunch there. All we are asking for is evening drinks."

Sir John is not a man to show off. "The airlift was a bit boring," he recalls. "I had to fly to Berlin 260 times. It was rather like being a bus driver."



WHILE Ian Botham has been stamped by the legal bill for his libel battle with Imran Khan, the former Pakistan captain (pictured with wife Jemima) is in dispute with his solicitor, Howard Cohen, over bills for the case. "We are entitled to an itemised account, which we have not received. We can resolve this," says a Khan crony. But a court hearing is scheduled for next month. Offers Cohen: "We are in ongoing discussions."

A LARGE bird tells me that the BBC has had problems with its spanking new logo: a stark design featuring straight letters and minus the coloured bars. The cost of this artistic breakthrough? £5 million to you, the licence-payer. One director said that "a competition on Blue Peter would have resulted in a far cheaper and better offering". The aim was to fix the logo to the side of Television Centre, with the letters hollowed out of plastic. This idea was eventually scrapped after officials realised that the letters would make a perfect home for pigeons — and their, er, droppings.

JASPER GERARD



BLAIR'S COMMONWEALTH

Its strength lies in Balfour's vision of unity based on freedoms

Five hundred years after John Cabot, arriving off Newfoundland, wrote the first sentence of Britain's imperial history, 43 heads of state gather today for the summit of the unique experiment in post-imperial association that is the Commonwealth. For most, this will be their first extended encounter with a British Government committed to raising their organisation's profile. New Labour, new Commonwealth, will be the Edinburgh theme.

The emphasis will, rightly, be on current tasks, not history. Labour judges the Commonwealth a success to be built on. To judge by the lengthening queue to join by states as disparate as Yemen, Rwanda and possibly even Jordan and Israel, by Fiji's return to the fold and even by the noisy demands for an Edinburgh welcome from renegade Nigeria, it is not alone in its enthusiasm. Yet the Government's ambitions for this summit appear to be slim. It risks misreading the Commonwealth's real comparative advantage in the crowded world of international organisations.

Trade and investment, the theme Britain has chosen, as host, to open the debate, is a perfectly sensible topic. But on trade and the economy, the Commonwealth is not and will never be the pivotal forum. The Government should not be satisfied with a declaration of high-minded principles about economic co-operation in a globalised world. The most useful thing such a debate could do would be to focus on accountable government and the fight against corruption.

That would link economics and politics — and recognise the plain truth that it is as a political forum that the vitality of the Commonwealth is judged. The 1991 Harare Declaration, which committed Commonwealth governments to "democracy, the rule of law, just and honest government and human rights", made this heterogeneous club a rule-based organisation. It now needs to demonstrate that these rules are taken extremely seriously. That means tough decisions at Edinburgh on Nigeria, and a frank warning to Kenya's increasingly repressive President, Daniel arap Moi. Both questions will be divisive and potentially

embarrassing. Robin Cook appears to believe that as host, Britain cannot go around saying rude things to a Kenyan guest. But if the Commonwealth is to retain its newfound reputation as a champion of the common weal, words must not be muffled for the sake of temporary harmony.

Two years ago at Auckland, Nigeria was suspended from the Commonwealth after the judicial murder of the Nigerian writer, Ken Saro-wiwa. That summit demanded the release of 43 political prisoners, including the winner of the annual presidential elections, Moshood Abiola, a respected former President, Olusegun Obasanjo, and Ogoni political activists. None has been freed. The summit also set a deadline, then said to be two years, by which Nigeria must restore democracy or face expulsion. A Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) was created to investigate, mediate and, if Nigeria did not co-operate, devise stiffer sanctions. CMAG has been treated with utter contempt by Nigeria's singularly corrupt and lawless military regime.

Expulsion ought in these circumstances to follow. So should economic sanctions, as Mr Cook vociferously demanded when in opposition. Yet Labour and Emeke Anyaoku, the Commonwealth Secretary-General, are now united against expulsion or even a serious toughening of sanctions. They justify this on the ground that the Commonwealth would have no leverage on Nigeria if it threw it out. But it has been unable to exercise any such stand.

Nigeria would not be so cross about its exclusion from this summit if it did not, at root, value its membership: it would be more likely to make concessions as the price of rejoining than it will if it is persuaded that the Commonwealth will do nothing. That is what Nigeria's own brave democrats believe, and will tell the fringe non-governmental meetings in which Labour has encouraged heads of government to participate. Chief Anyaoku, himself a Nigerian, is delicately positioned. Leadership from this Government, pledged as it is to put human rights at the heart of foreign policy, is both expected and required.

HARRYING HARRIET

The battle within Labour for welfare reform

Baiting Harriet Harman, the Social Security Secretary, has become a favourite sport of MPs, old and new, Labour and Tory. Commentators love to criticise her too. One thing her enemies have in common: they are almost all men. Perhaps because she is so frank about her feminism, Ms Harman seems to raise men's hackles. But her critics do have a point.

In the past couple of days, the Social Security Secretary has done herself no favours. She has annoyed the Lord Chancellor by implying that women judges were needed to preside over domestic violence cases. He conceded that he wanted more women judges but stamped on the idea that men were anything other than impartial. Then yesterday, on the Today programme, Ms Harman flummoxed helplessly when faced with statistics showing that few lone parents were taking up the opportunity to have an interview with an employment adviser. There was a sense of *déjà vu* as Ms Harman became the Virginia Bottomley of this Government?

In many respects the two women are similar: when asked a difficult question, they stick to the script, repeating the answer they gave earlier. Both lack rigour. Though perfectly intelligent, neither could be described as intellectual. And both, when pressed, sound defensive and petulant.

Ms Harman's officials praise her competence and her skill at chairing meetings. On the whole, they prefer her to the Minister of State for Welfare Reform, Frank Field, who threatens too many of their long-held beliefs and is held to show none of her instinct for making things happen. The

Treasury has found her surprisingly effective: she has thrown herself into the comprehensive spending review with vigour and did not balk at the politically difficult task of cutting benefits for lone parents. Ideologically, she is fully behind the new Labour project.

Her relationship with Mr Field, however, is extremely poor. Her friends tell journalists how badly he is doing. She sees him as a threat and an enemy: yet he is unlikely to oust her since she has the Chancellor's protection. A wise politician would have tried to bring him into her circle.

There is some scope for friction with the Chancellor too. Although Ms Harman and Mr Brown are close, he is keen on integrating tax and benefits, which she sees as a threat to the independent taxation of women. To go back to taxing husbands' and wives' income together would, in her view, be unacceptable.

Within the Labour Party, Ms Harman has not recovered from her decision to send her son to a grammar school, a move that even alienated some women MPs. In a party of inverted snobs, she will never be as popular as, say, Mo Mowlam or Clare Short. This could prove a grave handicap to Mr Blair's intention to reform welfare. Almost whatever route he takes will be anathema to the Left and Centre-Left of the party. Yet it will be presented by three of the most modernising and least popular ministers: Ms Harman and Messrs Brown and Field.

If Mr Blair had a centre-left Secretary of State, such as David Blunkett, he could protect his flank. As it is, the Prime Minister may find himself sorely exposed.

ROMAN HOLIDAY

There are better ways to revisit the past than trampling it

To be transported by timewarp back to Ancient Rome is an ancient fantasy. Each generation attempts the trip by its peculiar vehicles, from Bulwer Lytton's historical blockbusters to the Hollywood genre of toga-and-trident epics. Alma Tadema's Roman maidens look like Victorian sixth-formers in gym tunics, while Asterix goes in for Eleusian puns about the Classics. So the project to build an Ancient Roman theme park is merely the latest in a long series of attempts to rediscover our Roman heritage.

As our Rome correspondent reports today, the plan is to build a three-quarter-sized model of Ancient Rome at Orvieto, two hours' journey by executive coach from the original. Replica Rome will take more than a day to build. But the city of fibreglass should be ready for the barbarian invasions (in the original sense) expected for the millennium. Everything is going to be done to make the Roman experience authentic. Visitors to the Palatine hotel will dine by torchlight instead of electricity, and use fingers instead of forks to savour the pungency of *garum*, the original of the anchovy paste called Prawn Peperium. The businessmen in charge of the Roman experience have not yet settled on any period, for the real Eternal City is an archaeological palimpsest of 25 centuries. They should pick Rome at the time of Nero.

Henry VIII is the best known and most popular of the English kings, although he was a dangerous autocrat and serial wife-killer. Similarly Nero is the best known and most popular of Roman emperors, although he was a dangerous autocrat and serial wife-killer of his mother, wife and anybody else who got in his way. He thought he was a master lyre-player, warbler and actor, and inflicted himself upon audiences at musical competitions. So his Roman experience should include singing and acting contests (Nero-oke?). And there should be chariot races. Nero thought he was a master jockey, and insisted on riding a ten-horse chariot at the Olympic Games. He fell off, but was still prudently adjudged to have won.

There could be a lake with joke collapsible boats, wrestling matches with tame lions for visitors dressed as Hercules or Diana, and competitive fire-raising. As Napoleon said on St Helena, most of what history says about Nero is probably false. And indeed Suetonius and Tacitus were embittered and spinning for the new regime. But they knew that colourful rascals make popular history. And as Williamsburg already shows, and the Stonehenge visitor centre will show, new technology done with imagination and care can open windows on the past as well as save the old stones themselves.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

'Greenhouse wars' — is the Earth really getting hotter?

From Mr Michael Hird

Sir, Dr David Carson's response (letter, October 20) to Nigel Hawkes's question, "Is the Earth really getting hotter?" (Mind and Matter, October 13), will have served a useful purpose if it helps to bring out into the open the fierce debate which is going on between the global warming theorists and the sceptics. Readers of the *New Scientist* (article "Greenhouse wars — why the rebels have a cause", July 19), will have been left in no doubt that passions run high, and that there are heavyweights on both sides. Scientific consensus there is not.

The rise in temperature of about 0.6°C over the last century is debatable because ground stations were being absorbed by urbanisation over the period; cities are warmer than the countryside. However, whatever warming did occur took place in the first half of that period, whereas 70 per cent of the increase in carbon dioxide emissions occurred in the second half. Nigel Hawkes rightly makes the point that the satellite record has been confirmed by the balloon record, and confirms that very little warming, if any, has occurred since 1945.

The most credible explanation for climatic variability is the impact of solar flares on the earth's atmosphere, as put forward by researchers at the

Danish Meteorological Institute.

The politicisation of this issue is fascinating and will be on full display at the Kyoto summit in December. Perhaps we should ask Dr Carson and the other believers to state what observed facts would disprove the theory, which at the moment is showing all the signs of a scientific hypothesis in terminal decline.

Yours sincerely,
MICHAEL HIRD,
4 Copperfields,
Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire.

From Dr David Cromwell

Sir, As a Green activist and former Shell geophysicist, I will not be joining in celebrations to mark Shell UK's 100th birthday. How can I, when Shell UK's sister company in the United States, Shell Oil, remains a member of the Global Climate Coalition, the fossil fuel lobby which has spent more than \$10 million on advertising intended to convince Americans that their jobs would be at risk if carbon dioxide-cutting measures are adopted at the Kyoto summit?

Last week's announcement that Shell International is making a "significant" move into the renewable energy market (report, Business, October 17) is at first sight heartening. However, oil companies are reluctant to

admit that — as a result of decades of government subsidies to prop up the fossil fuel industry — the economics of the energy markets are loaded in favour of carbon dioxide-emitting fuels.

Heinz Rothemann, managing director of Shell UK Exploration and Production, last month told delegates at a conference in London on the future of the UK oil and gas industry: "It is a hard fact of life that renewable energy sources are not economically viable."

The reality is that with human ingenuity we can adapt the economics accordingly. Fixing the climate system would be somewhat trickier. Mr Rothemann's comments suggest that he lacks that quality which Shell personnel management prizes above all others — holistic thinking — which recognises that the economic system is subordinate to the resources provided by our living planet, not the other way around.

While Shell refuses to acknowledge this, there is no cause for celebration.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID CROMWELL (Member,
Southampton Green Party),
32 Avenue Road,
Southampton, Hampshire.
ddc@soc.soton.ac.uk
October 20.

Prostate cancer test

From Mr D. L. Crosby

Sir, It is good to see today (Body and Mind) that Dr Thomas Stuttaford is back in action, and we all hope that he will continue to make a swift and complete recovery from his total prostatectomy (article, October 9; letters, October 16). However, any call for universal, regular prostate cancer screening needs to be viewed with caution.

The recommended age range and frequency of such tests is unclear, and those suspected to be positive for cancer will need invasive investigations. For those subsequently undergoing major surgery, there are risks and side-effects, even in the most capable surgical hands.

The result of a national programme along these lines is conjectural. It would certainly need substantial resources, but if the outcome was favourable, it would have to be funded. Clearly, therefore, a carefully controlled trial needs to be done. Until we are sure of the benefits it would be irresponsible to divert such major resources away from other healthcare interventions which we know to be effective.

There is no denying that prostate cancer is a most unpleasant disease. More research rather than universal screening may be the best way forward.

Yours sincerely,
DAVID CROSBY
(Honorary Consultant Surgeon),
Cardiff Community Healthcare,
Trenwydd,
Fairwater Road, Llandaff, Cardiff,
October 23.

Prayers and pints

From the Reverend Vaughan Roberts

Sir, I was surprised by the concern of your correspondents (letters, October 20) over Dr Carey's recent suggestion that churches should arrange meetings in pubs and supermarkets. So often in the past Christians, by refusing to adapt their practices to fit in with contemporary culture, have created unnecessary hindrances for non-believers. Our message must never change, but we must be willing to alter its packaging.

Many of the students I work among in Oxford have never been to church and find its rituals alienating, and yet are still fascinated by the person of Jesus of Nazareth. We have recently started meetings in a local pub, providing an opportunity to discuss the historic truths of Christianity over a meal and a pint. These have proved immensely popular. A significant number of those who have attended are now regular churchgoers.

We cannot expect to reach a largely unchurched generation of young people without being willing to meet them on their territory.

Yours faithfully,
VAUGHAN ROBERTS
(The Students' Pastor),
St Ebbe's Church, Oxford.
stebbes@parol1-way.co.uk
October 20.

Sound investment?

From Mr Russell McCormick

Sir, Mr J. White (letter, October 21) opines that breaking the sound barrier on land was a "stupid waste" of talent, enterprise and courage.

As a physicist and engineer, I am aware that nearly every improvement in life is as a result of research, such as breaking the sound barrier on land. I am particularly reminded of your correspondent's namesake, Sir Frank White, and his development of the gas turbine, which radically changed air transport.

Have no doubt that we shall benefit from the work done in the Black Rock desert of Nevada.

Yours sincerely,
RUSSELL MCCORMICK,
17 River Green,
Hamble, Hampshire.
russell.mccormick@compuserve.com
October 21.

Falklands talks

From Sir David Scott

Sir, President Clinton's suggestion in Buenos Aires that Britain and Argentina should resume talks on the Falkland Islands (report and leading article, October 18) calls to mind the last occasion on which the two countries had face-to-face discussions on the islands' future and indeed reached agreement on the first steps towards what we sincerely hoped would contribute to a final settlement.

In 1971 and 1972 I led a team from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to the islands and to Buenos Aires to investigate, in full co-operation with the Islands Council, how closer relations between the Falklands and Argentina could be developed.

In November 1972 we signed a Communications Agreement between Britain and Argentina, under which the Argentine Government undertook to provide *inter alia* the construction of a temporary airstrip at Port Stanley, the provision of an air service between Port Stanley and Comodoro Rivadavia and hospital facilities in Argentina for cases of serious illness, together with subsidised secondary education for the islands' children.

In exchange, Argentina secured the right of entry for her citizens to the

islands and a general relaxation of the trading and other restrictions which had existed up to that time. On balance the agreement was greatly to the islanders' advantage.

The object was not merely to secure a generous package, but to convince the islanders that we were not, as they had earlier accused Lord Chalfont, in the process of "selling them down the River Plate". I believed that a long-term solution of the vital question of sovereignty would have to depend on the agreement holding for a minimum of 25 years, during which a generation of islanders would have grown up who had been to school in Argentina and who hopefully no longer regarded the Argentines primarily as predators.

Unfortunately, ten years later the Argentine Government invaded the islands, thereby shattering for at least a further generation the islanders' hard-won confidence that they could be trusted as good neighbours. Sadly, discussions in Buenos Aires, at no ever high a level, are still unlikely to restore any such confidence unless the islanders can somehow be once again involved in the process.

Yours sincerely,
DAVID SCOTT,
Wayside, Moushill Lane,
Milford, Godalming, Surrey.

Cold War propaganda

From Mr Robert Elphick

Sir, Your report (October 20) of Michael Nelson's book about broadcasting in the Cold War, headlined "M46 led Cold War propaganda to BBC", seems to give the impression that there was something reprehensible in the activities of the Foreign Office's Information Research Department (IRD).

As a correspondent in the late 1950s in Moscow, and later in Vienna, trying to make sense of the communist dictatorships, I often made use of IRD's output. The stuff they produced was reasonably factual and far from the kind of propaganda we had to deal with from all the official media in

these countries.

It was offered as a service. We did not regard it as propaganda and I could take what I liked from the supply. As such it was a necessary and welcome counterpart to the flood of lies and half-lies produced by the regimes in question, which were concerned to make us believe in the scientific inevitability of the triumph of communism over capitalism.

Far from having their achievement called into question now that the Cold War is safely over, the IRD ought to be given due recognition for their sterling service.

Yours sincerely,
ROBERT ELPHICK,
90 Lupus Street, SW1,
October 21.

After the storm

From Mr David Edwards

Sir, On January 3, 1989, you printed a letter from Dr Oliver Racke, the leading authority on trees and woodland, advising landowners against rushing into solutions for the problems created by the Great Storm of October 1987.

He said that the need for replacing ancient woodland was dubious, that replanting is destructive of a wood's character, and that an existing wood is the worst place in which to get planted trees to grow. Libby Purves ("When the great wind blew", October 14) takes the same line — that nature vigorously restores itself.

Here, in our piece of semi-natural ancient woodland, we took the contrary view. Many trees as old as 150 years had simply been blown out of the ground, which is mainly sand. We thought the only sensible thing to do was to clear them away and replant

among the surviving trees with the same species that had flourished for hundreds of years.

So far the result has exceeded all our expectations. We have large numbers of fine straight oak, ash, cherry and hornbeam, many already 15 feet high.

They have needed a lot of care and maintenance, which perhaps a professional forester would have found uneconomic. Yet the moral is that replanting ancient woodland can work well, if it is done carefully.

Above all, we have moved towards having a mixed-age wood, which is now seen by many foresters as the best model for future management, replacing clear felling by selective culling, so that the canopy always remains.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID EDWARDS,
Olivers Lane, Colchester, Essex.
October 21.

Scots markers

From Dr John Pearson

Sir, "Walking through the forests of the Scottish Highlands 2,000 years ago..." The time traveller would have had no National Trust acorns... to guide him" (report, October 23). Nor would he today — but the National Trust for Scotland makes up with its thistle symbols.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN PEARSON,
4 Caven Place, Ecclefechan,
Lockerbie, Dumfries and Galloway.
pearson@john.dumgal.gov.uk
October 23.

Letters may be faxed to
0171-782-5046.
e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk

Conspiracy theory cavalier with facts

From Mr Peter Shipley

Sir, The case put by Professor Hamersmidt-Hummel (report, "Rebel at the easel", October 18) that the artist Sir Anthony Van Dyck harboured republican sympathies may be strong on pictorial symbolism but reveals a tenuous grasp of English history.

In particular her contention that the groom in the 1635 painting of King Charles I at the hunt is Oliver Cromwell in disguise preparing to seize the reins of power is completely unhistorical. At that time Cromwell was living in comparative obscurity in St Ives, Huntingdonshire. His fortunes were low and although he was involved in some local matters he did not establish himself as a national figure until some ten years later.

Your report's regard for historical facts appears equally — if I may use the expression — cavalier. The case against John Hampden for refusing to pay "ship money" was not concluded until June 1638, and he did not have an ear chopped off. That fate befell John Bastwick for seditious libel in June 1637.

Some of this material could have formed the background to the martial portrait of 1638, but the stormy signs that the professor detects are more likely to reflect fears about the imminence of war with Scotland, of which no mention is made. But even this did not threaten Charles's hold on the English throne.

Yours faithfully,
P. S. SHIPLEY,
17 Park Avenue,
Caterham, Surrey.
shipley@btinternet.com
October 19.

From Lord Dacre of Glanton

Sir, The fantasies of Hildegarde Hamersmidt-Hummel may not merit the edacious use of powder and shot that would disperse them — far less a full page in *The Times*; but surely we may admire the intrepidity of this German professor of "Anglistik" who is prepared to correct us all by placing Van Dyck's portraits of Charles I "in the context of contemporary events" when it is clear that that context she knows nothing, absolutely nothing.

Yours faithfully,
DACRE OF GLANTON,
House of Lords,
October 19.

Mozart unmasked

From Professor John N. Adams

Sir, Your headline "Musical scholars unmask Mozart: the plagiarist" (report, October 6), suggests that Mozart was guilty of reprehensible conduct: he was not. The idea that the borrowing of themes (or indeed whole sections of works) is wrong is a development largely associated with the Romantic period and the idea of the author or composer as individual creator.

No Baroque composer had no copyright law, and a law based on the French concept of the natural right of the author or composer to his creations was enacted only a generation after Mozart's death.

Mozart's "hit tunes" from his operas were freely borrowed by others for wind bands. He would have lived by the same rule.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN ADAMS
(Director),
Intellectual Property Institute,
25 Southampton Buildings,
Chancery Lane, WC2,
October 14.

More, please

From Mrs E. J. Willmore

Sir, Before any irrevocable decisions are made against the cloning of humans, may I suggest a quick programme to replicate Libby Purves and Alistair Cooke (in large numbers) in the interests of accuracy, common sense, wit and balanced judgment.

Yours faithfully,
E. J. WILLMORE,
Vicarage Farm, Claxton, York.
October 21.

Eastbourne Spice

From Miss Christine Moore

Sir, Your front page pictures of the Conservatives in casual dress (October 22) reminded me less of *The Clothes Show* than "The Spice Boys go to Eastbourne": left to right, Sparty Spice (Desmond Swayne), Ginger Spice (Tim Loughton), Baby Spice (William Hague), Posh Spice (Phillip Hammond) and Scary Spice (John Redwood).

Yours faithfully,
CHRISTINE MOORE,
27 Willowbank Drive,
Rathfriland, Dublin 14.
christine.moore@ida.ie
October 22.

OBITUARIES

HAROLD FRENCH

Harold French, actor and theatre director, died on October 19 aged 97. He was born on April 23, 1900.

In a stage career that links him with the golden age of Harley Granville Barker before the First World War, Harold French began his working life on the boards. From 1931 onwards, he was equally at home in films both as actor and director. But it is for his work for the stage that he will be principally remembered.

He had worked in the theatre from the age of 12, making his first stage appearance in 1912 in one of Granville Barker's famous Shakespeare revivals, *The Winter's Tale*. More than twenty years later, after a career of no great distinction in light and musical comedy, he shifted, with much greater success, to direction. Douglas Fairbanks Jr., prefacing a section of French's autobiography, said he had known very few men of the theatre whose lives had been so full in terms of professional fulfilment or so rich in friends.

This was perhaps an over-generous view of French's achievements on the boards. He never claimed to be a very good actor — on his own admission he lacked the necessary dedication. As a result, he was often "resting". His estimate of his own talents was not infrequently shared by the reviewers. Of his best-known role, that of Dick in the *Blue*

Lagoon, Dorothy Parker remarked tartly on its Broadway opening: "We have enough bad actors in America as it is. Why bother to import another?"

French's niche in the history of 20th-century theatre is, rather, for his work as a director, notably for getting Terence Rattigan's first play, *French Without Tears*, out of rehearsal — where for a long time it looked like being one of the stages more spectacular disasters — into the theatre, where it became the triumph which launched Rattigan's career.

Harold French was born in London of Irish parents. He found school tiresome and began his stage career by answering an Italia Conti advertisement for "a well-educated boy of good appearance". After auditioning he was immediately engaged as understudy to Eric Rae's Mamillius in Granville Barker's Savoy Theatre production of *The Winter's Tale*, which had Henry Ainley as Leontes. He got his opportunity in October 1912, when he succeeded Rae in the role.

He decided (so he always liked to say) to ask if this William Shakespeare had written any other plays. History does not record what, if any, Granville Barker's reaction to this brazen ignorance was; but soon he had the chance to act in another Shakespeare play, as a black page in Granville Barker's production of *Twelfth Night* (also at the Savoy in 1912).

Now deeply committed to the theatre, he appeared in a Christmas piece, with Sybil Thorndike and Lewis Casson, at the Gaiety, Manchester, in 1912-13; in a London revival of *Where the Rainbow Ends* (Garrick, 1913); and in *Hannels* at the Liverpool Playhouse — with the young Noël Coward and Gertrude Lawrence.

From then on, he was a familiar figure on the London stage and in the provinces. In the early years of the First World War he had small parts at the Haymarket before going for nine months to the Birmingham Repertory, where he was directed in a variety of parts by John Drinkwater. Astonishingly, for one so young, he was a great success in a number of roles as old men.

In 1917 he was called up into the Army and joined the Royal Flying Corps. On demobilisation, he made his first postwar appearance with Robert Lorraine's company as both the Baron de Casterne and Athos in *Cyrano de Bergerac* at the Garrick in 1919. He always — perhaps somewhat ironically in view of his New York reception — regarded his best role as the shipwrecked youth in *The Blue Lagoon*, in which he opened at the Prince of Wales in August 1920.

From then onwards for the next ten years he had a scattering of light roles of all sorts. Characteristic of this fare were *The Visitor* in *The Wonderful Visit* by St John

Ervine, from H. G. Wells's novel; Wilbur Jennings in *Good Gracious, Anzabelle* (Duke of York's, 1923); and four months as Stephen Audley alongside Lillian Braithwaite in *Isabel, Edward and Anne* (Haymarket, 1923).

A diet of revue (with the Hulberts) and in musical comedy, a run, with Gertrude Lawrence, in *Oh, Kay!* (His Majesty's, 1927-8), and another, in *Virginia* (Palace) kept him going into the 1930s. His last performance of any note on the London stage was in a farce, *Night of the Garter* (Strand, 1932), which he dismissed.

By this time it was abundantly clear to him that neither his talents nor his inclinations fitted him for performing on the stage, but his ability to get on with the varied temperaments to be found in the theatrical world, and an undoubted talent for helping a play to develop from first reading to dress rehearsal, made him decide to stay in the theatre, as a director.

His chief success was Hubert Griffith's version of *A Youth at the Helm* (1934) and, in marked contrast to an acting career that had continually stuttered, he never looked back. He went on to direct nearly forty other plays, his flair in this sphere being seen at its best in the case of Rattigan's *French Without Tears*. Rehearsals went forward with a sense of deepening despair that this light comedy could ever be made to come to life. The

first dress rehearsal was a total fiasco. Yet it came out right on the night. The premiere at the Criterion in 1936 was a triumph, and Rattigan never looked back. That this was so was in a large measure French's achievement.

French continued directing into the 1970s, visiting South Africa with a number of productions including *The Winter's Tale* in 1971. Among the films he directed were *Jeannie* (1941); *Secret Mission* (1942); *Dodie Smith's Dear Octopus* (1943), a crisp upper-class comedy of manners, and probably his best; and *Rob Roy the Highland Rogue* (1953) which starred Richard Todd, Glynis Johns and James Robertson Justice, none of whom however managed to inject life into what was a somewhat wooden version of the rebel's adventures.

French published a first volume of autobiography, *I Swore I Never Would*, in 1970 and a second, *I Thought I Never Could*, in 1973. Unlike so many luvvies' memoirs, which tend to apoplexiate the reader under the sheer weight of darlings encountered en route, they were well-written and hugely enjoyable — something that certainly came as no surprise to those he used to regale with his stories at the Garrick Club.

Harold French was married first to Phyl Arnold, who died in 1941. His second wife, the actress Mary Parker, also predeceased him, as did his daughter.



Harold French contracting the Australian actress Mary Parker, later to become his wife, to play in the melodrama *Tabitha*

SIR REGINALD MURLEY

Sir Reginald Murley, KBE, President of the Royal College of Surgeons, 1977-80, died on October 2 aged 81. He was born on August 2, 1916.

ONE of the most able, colourful and vociferous surgeons of his time, Reginald Murley climbed practically every peak in his profession. But that never inhibited him from inveighing fiercely at every available opportunity against the organisation of the National Health Service and what he saw as its "manifest leveling-down of standards".

As a staunch individualist, he hated medical bureaucracy and centralism, and advocated much greater variety and choice for both doctor and patient. In 1985, before the advent of the NHS internal market, he urged in one of his frequent letters to *The Times* that the "highly insensitive nationalised service" should be liberalised, and that patients and their family doctors should learn to "shop around".

The son of a fur-broker, Reginald Murley went to school at Dulwich College and thence to St Bartholomew's Hospital as a medical student. He gained scholarships in anatomy and physiology and was awarded the Sir William Dunn Exhibition. He qualified with the diplomas of MRCS, LRCP in 1939, and in the same year graduated from the University of London with honours in medicine and surgery.

As a Territorial officer in the Royal Army Medical Corps at the outbreak of the Second World War, he was attached to a field ambulance unit which was posted to Palestine and the Middle East and later to Abyssinia, where he served with 1 and 2 Maxillo-facial Unit. He saw further service in the Middle East, Italy, France, The Netherlands and Germany, rising to the rank of major.

Back in civilian life, he



became a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons in 1946, and a Master of Surgery two years later. His appointment as consulting surgeon to the Royal Northern and City of St Albans Hospitals gave him the basis on which his later practice was founded, and he served both hospitals loyally and energetically until his retirement.

Murley was a highly experienced general surgeon, with a wide interest in many fields. As a plastic surgeon in the war he extended his activities into many branches, notably into problems of thrombosis, thyroid and breast disease.

In the 1980s he gave some welcome publicity to the conservative local surgery for breast cancer, in preference to radical mastectomy, that was pioneered by Geoffrey Keynes as far back as the 1920s. "I would firmly encourage every woman who may find herself in this unhappy situation thoroughly to cross-examine her

family doctor and surgeon before agreeing to any seemingly disastrous line of treatment," he wrote in *The Times*. Aside from his surgical commitments, Murley became involved in medical politics. He was a vice-president of the Fellowship for Freedom in Medicine, and an adviser to the Social Affairs Unit and the Institute of Economic Affairs. He believed that in its first 30 years buck-passing between committees had become a way of life in the NHS, and that standards had fallen as a consequence.

In 1975 he advised a sub-committee of the US Congress not to follow the British system of a near-monopoly in medicine. The record of NHS capital works, he said, had been "disastrous", with "a few very pretentious and expensive large hospitals" absorbing funds which would have been better spent on equipment and diagnostic facilities. At the time, British doctors

were emigrating at the rate of 300-400 a year, equivalent to the output of four medical schools and, as a result, more than 60 per cent of junior hospital staff were foreign. "Mental and geriatric patients are often cared for by doctors who have but limited command of English," he said. And the shortages were leading doctors to become less like members of a profession, more like trade unionists, "unduly preoccupied by their rights while less and less concerned with their responsibilities".

Murley served on the council of the British Medical Association, and was an active member of many medical societies. He had a special interest in the Hunterian Society and gave its oration in 1981, but he was particularly concerned with the council of the Royal College of Surgeons, of which he was president from 1977 to 1980. He had been a Hunterian Professor in 1980, and gave the college's Bradshaw Lecture in 1981, the same year that he was elected a patron of the college. In 1983 he was president of the Harveian Society. He had been appointed KBE in 1979.

He was a man of extraordinary vitality and energy, outspoken and challenging, but with endless kindness, particularly to his juniors. He spoke clearly and wrote with care and deliberation; but he revelled in controversy, especially with those in administrative authority. He fought authority on the slightest provocation, but his intention was always constructive, as was shown by his writings on the financing of medical care and on the ventilation of operating theatres.

After his formal retirement he accepted the chairmanship of the Medical Council on Alcoholism in addition to numerous other commitments.

In 1947 he married Daphne (née Garrod), who was related to a famous medical family. He is survived by his wife and their three sons and three daughters.

THE RIGHT REV ROBIN WOODS

The Right Rev Robin Woods, KCMG, KCVO, Bishop of Worcester, 1971-81, died on October 20 aged 83. He was born on February 15, 1914.

ONE of the last of the courtier clerics, Robin Woods followed very much in the tradition of Randall Davidson, with whom — though, unlike Davidson, he never became Archbishop of Canterbury — he shared the distinction of having been a highly successful Dean of Windsor.

As Domestic Chaplain to the Queen, a post normally combined with the Windsor deanery, he played an influential part in the education of the Prince of Wales. He was largely instrumental in the decision that led to the Prince being sent at the age of 18 as an undergraduate to Trinity College, Cambridge. (Woods himself was an old Trinity man and had at the time two sons in the college.) Years later he was to be publicly thanked by Trinity's then Master, R. A. Butler, for having been "a great help to us in introducing the Prince to the college".

Robert Wynner Woods, always known as Robin, came from a family with a long record of distinguished service to the Church. The youngest son of Edward Woods, Bishop of Lichfield, and Clemence Woods (née Barclay), his eldest brother Frank was Archbishop of Melbourne and Primate of Australia, while his second brother Sam was an archdeacon in New Zealand.

Woods was always proud of his mother's Norfolk connections, and he was educated at Gresham's School, Holt, before going up to Trinity. The friendships he made in his university years endured throughout his life, and he was the mainspring of a group of Christian colleagues who continued to meet regularly, giving themselves the title of the Trinity Group.

Trained for the ministry at Westcott House, Cambridge, Woods was ordained in 1938 and, while holding a couple of curacies (one in London and the other in St Albans), also served from 1937 to 1942 as assistant secretary of the then flourishing Student Christian Movement. It was while working in this sphere that he developed his interest in young people, and also his determination to relate the Christian faith to matters of social concern.

From 1942 to 1946 Woods was a Chaplain to the Forces

with the Eighth Army, being particularly active during the Italian campaign when he ran the Chaplains' Centre at Assisi (he was also mentioned in dispatches). After the war he was for five years Vicar of the industrial parish of South Wigston in Leicestershire before, in 1951, becoming Archdeacon of Singapore, and Vicar of St Andrew's Cathedral there.

In 1958 he returned home, at the invitation of Leslie Hunter, to become Archdeacon of Sheffield and Rector of Tankersley. He remained there until in 1962 he was appointed Dean of Windsor and Domestic Chaplain to the Queen — an appointment for which his varied experience and background made him particularly suitable, though one that probably owed more (since the deanery of Windsor is, in effect, within the royal gift) to the longstanding friendship of his father — reaching back to the days of the Queen's grandfather, George V — with the Royal Family.

His nine years at Windsor were certainly the period of his greatest influence and contribution. Faced with the difficult task of restoring the medieval buildings attached to St George's Chapel, and rationalising the canons' accommodation, he succeeded in turning this necessity into a

virtue. The surplus accommodation was converted into a conference centre, and it was his vision and drive which created St George's House as a place where the interplay between things spiritual and matters temporal could be developed by leaders and people of influence from every sector of the nation's life, and where systematic training could be offered to all levels of leadership within the Church. In this effort he was greatly helped by the active support and friendship of the Duke of Edinburgh.

While at Windsor he was also secretary to the one-hopeful Anglican/Methodist Commission for Unity, and its eventual failure in 1973 was a deep personal disappointment to him.

From 1971 to 1981 he was Bishop of Worcester, where he is remembered not only for his leadership over a difficult period of the Church's life, but also for his various contributions to local and national affairs — as a member of the House of Lords from the mid-1970s, for his chairmanship of the industrial committee of the C of E's Board of Social Responsibility, and of the Council of Queen's College, Birmingham. He was also a Church Commissioner and vice-chairman of the Redundant Churches Committee as

well as being a director of Christian Aid.

The more courtly aspects of his life were reflected in his appointments as Registrar of the Order of the Garter while Dean of Windsor, and Prelate of the Order of St Michael and St George while Bishop of Worcester. He was appointed a Knight Commander of the Victorian Order in 1971 and a Knight Commander of St Michael and St George in 1989 on giving up the prelate of the order. During his retirement he was an assistant bishop in the diocese of Gloucester.

Woods was a big man, with a booming voice and a great heart, which sometimes made him promise more than he could deliver. This larger-than-life quality also led him to speak of the great and famous in terms that could seem unduly familiar — not for nothing was his nickname "Royal Robin". Nevertheless, he possessed a real concern for people — particularly when they were ill or in distress. Among his lesser-known talents were his musical ability and his skill as an artist, especially with watercolours and in caricature.

He married in 1942 Henrietta ("Etta") Wilson, and throughout his life was a devoted family man. He is survived by his wife, his two sons and three daughters.



CHRYSANthemUMS CLUE IN BLAKE ESCAPE

FROM A STAFF REPORTER

In an intensive nation-wide search for George Blake, the spy who escaped from Wormwood Scrubs prison on Saturday, police were concentrating yesterday on ports and airfields. Blake had served five years of 42 years — the longest imposed in Britain...

A discreet watch is also being kept on certain embassies in London, and on their staffs.

One fear is that a man of Blake's experience, probably with alien contacts still in Britain, may have had his escape abroad well planned, if this was so he may have slipped away before the security net was tightened at sea and airports.

Police are hoping for a lead from two clues — a lift rope ladder, its rungs strengthened with knitting needles, which was found on the outside wall of the prison, and a pot of pink chrysanthemums. The pot, wrapped in green paper, was in Artillery Road, near the wall. The flowers were fresh. One theory is that the pot might have been a marker to show where the ladder should be thrown over the wall. Another view is that an accomplice used it to

ON THIS DAY

October 24, 1966

Blake, a Diplomatic Service officer, admitted spying at his trial in 1961, part of which was held in camera. He is said to have betrayed at least 42 British agents.

make himself look like a visitor to Hammett Hospital nearby.

An appeal was made on television last night for anyone who could give information about either the ladder or flowers to get in touch with Shepherd's Bush police station, where an investigation squad has been set up to study the escape.

Chief-superintendent, T Butler, head of the Flying Squad, is in charge, with Commander Evan Jones, head of Scotland Yard Special Branch. In control of inquiries into possible international political links with the escape. Prisoners recently released from Worm-

wood Scrubs were questioned; so were officers and prisoners in the gaol.

Blake was last seen by prison officials in the 5.30pm roll-call: at 7pm he was missing. A bar in a window in a second-storey landing had been sawn through.

The time was carefully chosen. On Saturday afternoon prisoners in the long-term wing, where Blake had his cell, are able to mix freely, and he was not due to be locked up for the night until 7pm.

After getting through the window, he is thought to have made for the wall 20 yards away. Once over the wall he could have crossed Wormwood Scrubs playing fields or gone down to the main road running past the prison and Hammersmith Hospital.

One point likely to be raised is why Blake was being held at Wormwood Scrubs, as one of the 320 long-term prisoners. He had been there since his conviction and he was regarded as a model prisoner. He was not on the "escape list".

The assumption seems to have been that Blake passed over all the information to which he had access, and thus his use to the Russians had gone. This reasoning may also explain why he was not moved to one of the security blocks at Leicester, Durham or Parkhurst...

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A discreet watch is also being kept on certain embassies in London, and on their staffs.

One fear is that a man of Blake's experience, probably with alien contacts still in Britain, may have had his escape abroad well planned, if this was so he may have slipped away before the security net was tightened at sea and airports.

Police are hoping for a lead from two clues — a lift rope ladder, its rungs strengthened with knitting needles, which was found on the outside wall of the prison, and a pot of pink chrysanthemums. The pot, wrapped in green paper, was in Artillery Road, near the wall. The flowers were fresh. One theory is that the pot might have been a marker to show where the ladder should be thrown over the wall. Another view is that an accomplice used it to

ON THIS DAY

October 24, 1966

Blake, a Diplomatic Service officer, admitted spying at his trial in 1961, part of which was held in camera. He is said to have betrayed at least 42 British agents.

make himself look like a visitor to Hammett Hospital nearby.

An appeal was made on television last night for anyone who could give information about either the ladder or flowers to get in touch with Shepherd's Bush police station, where an investigation squad has been set up to study the escape.

Chief-superintendent, T Butler, head of the Flying Squad, is in charge, with Commander Evan Jones, head of Scotland Yard Special Branch. In control of inquiries into possible international political links with the escape. Prisoners recently released from Worm-

wood Scrubs were questioned; so were officers and prisoners in the gaol.

Blake was last seen by prison officials in the 5.30pm roll-call: at 7pm he was missing. A bar in a window in a second-storey landing had been sawn through.

The time was carefully chosen. On Saturday afternoon prisoners in the long-term wing, where Blake had his cell, are able to mix freely, and he was not due to be locked up for the night until 7pm.

After getting through the window, he is thought to have made for the wall 20 yards away. Once over the wall he could have crossed Wormwood Scrubs playing fields or gone down to the main road running past the prison and Hammersmith Hospital.

One point likely to be raised is why Blake was being held at Wormwood Scrubs, as one of the 320 long-term prisoners. He had been there since his conviction and he was regarded as a model prisoner. He was not on the "escape list".

The assumption seems to have been that Blake passed over all the information to which he had access, and thus his use to the Russians had gone. This reasoning may also explain why he was not moved to one of the security blocks at Leicester, Durham or Parkhurst...

NEWS

Shares slide after Hong Kong crash

■ The London stock market suffered its biggest one-day fall since Black Monday — October 16, 1987 — as the shockwaves from an overnight crash in Hong Kong swept round the world.

In London the FTSE 100 index closed down 157.3 at 4,991.5. At one point, the FTSE had plunged 222 points with big falls for companies such as HSBC, which over the past few days has lost its position as Britain's biggest quoted company. Page 1

Au pair denies hitting baby

■ The British au pair Louise Woodward, accused of murdering an eight-month old baby in her care, told the jury that she did not ever shake, hit or slam the baby. Miss Woodward, calm, composed and articulate, told the court of how she found Matthew Eappen on February 4, the day on which he was rushed unconscious to hospital. Page 1

Road rage charge

A second-hand car dealer will appear in court charged with the manslaughter of Toby Exley and Karen Martin in a suspected road rage incident. Page 1

Laser pen case

A teenager who shone a dangerous beam into a policeman's eyes became the first person to be charged with assault by a laser pen. Page 1

Labour MEP row

Glenys Kinnock inflamed the row over the suspension of four Labour MEPs by accusing them of trying to revive the Labour Party demons her husband Neil had tried to banish. Page 2

Early start

Lester Piggott's four-year-old son Jamie made his debut on a racecourse demonstrating the skills of his pedigree bloodlines. Page 3

Late arrival

The privatised rail companies have been told that they face tighter regulation unless they make immediate improvements to their record on train delays. Page 4

Chocolate war

The European Parliament announced yesterday that the term "milk chocolate" should be outlawed and sales of the British product banned across the European Union until it is tested further. Page 5

The fall and rise of ancient Rome

■ With the centre of Rome increasingly clogged by tourist coaches, a business consortium has come up with the answer: a near-life-size copy of ancient Rome in the Umbrian countryside, where tourists can tramp round a duplicate Forum and Colosseum instead of ruining the real thing. They will even be able to witness a massacre of Christians. Page 17

Rector sex case

The Rector of Benlloch's wife was the mystery third informant who went to his bishop to complain of his affairs with women parishioners, an ecclesiastical court in Wales was told. Page 7

Gypsies save up

Three generations of the Vodarska family of Czech Gypsies are saving to go to Britain, like thousands of others all over Prague. Page 10

Civil Service savings

The Government has decided to credit civil servants with common sense in a scheme to cut unnecessary paperwork and save millions of pounds a year. Page 11

Hamas ambition

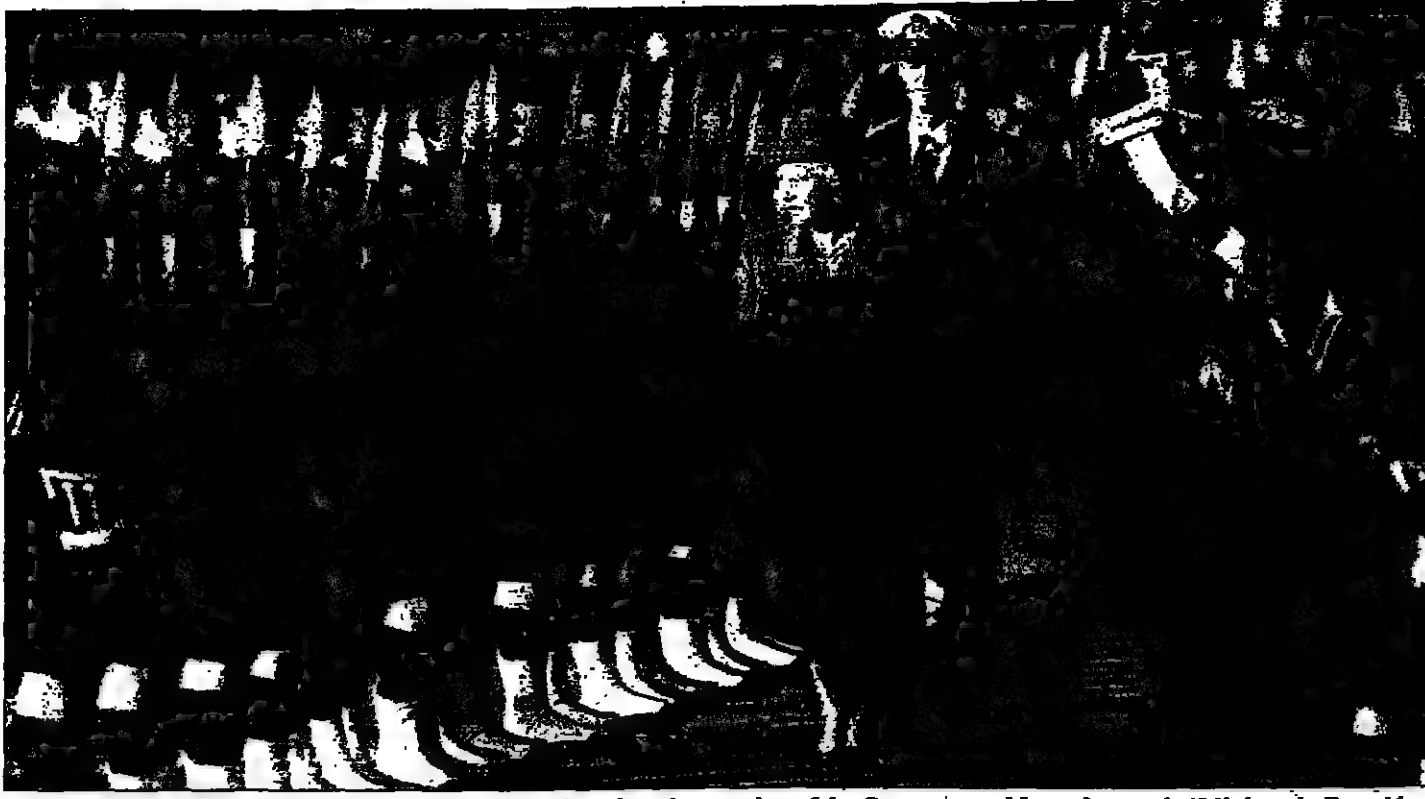
Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, leader of Hamas, has a one-state solution for the Palestinian problem: an Islamic one, encompassing all that is now Israel. Page 13

Rebel welcomed

Crowds poured out of Brazzaville's devastated streets to celebrate at the feet of Congo's rebel General Denis Sassou-Nguesso on his arrival back after five months of fighting. Page 15

Commonwealth doubt

The Queen's continuing role as head of the Commonwealth was unexpectedly thrown into question last night as Tony Blair tried to heal wounds over her visit to India last week. Page 16



The Queen inspects the 1st Battalion, Black Watch, before the opening of the Commonwealth conference in Edinburgh. Page 16

BUSINESS

MCI: The American company that BT is trying to merge with, lost \$182 million in the third quarter, compared with a profit of \$304 million a year ago. Page 25

Bank of England: Investors who have always fancied themselves as Governor now have their opportunity. The Bank is advertising for sale four regional branches which it closed this year. Page 25

Economy: World stock markets suffered heavy losses after Hong Kong suffered a severe bout of nerves over speculation against the Hong Kong dollar and its effect on the Far East economy. Page 25

Markets: The FTSE fell 157.3 to 4991.5. Sterling fell from 102.2 to 101.7, falling from \$1.6350 to \$1.6298 and DM2.9124 to DM2.9212. Page 28

SPORT

Motor racing: Michael Schumacher and Jacques Villeneuve promised a clean fight in the race that will decide the destiny of the world Formula One championship in Jerez on Sunday. Page 48

Tennis: Jonas Bjorkman proved too strong for Tim Henman in the third round of the Eurocard Open in Stuttgart. Page 46

Sailing: Lawrie Smith, the British yachtsman, is reflecting on a disappointing fourth place in *Silk Cut* after the first leg of the Whitbread Round the World Race. Page 42

Cricket: Philip Tufnell, the England spin bowler, appears before a disciplinary hearing today after his failure to take a drugs test following the final county championship match of the season. Page 45

FEATURES

Matters of fact: Playwrights have always tried to make a drama out of a political crisis, says Benedict Nightingale, and recently they have had a field day. Page 34

Hair-brained: *Scholar Happy* has some fun for the West End in the form of an interactive murder-mystery, wherein the audience must identify the murderer. Page 35

Crash barrier: It's uncanny, but Caitlin Moran predicted yesterday's stock-market crash the minute she saw that lots of pop stars are currently appearing in films. Page 36

Self control: As he gets set for a British tour, London's *Wainwright III* talks about his first love (himself), his painful quest for the truth, and his comic songs. Page 37

OPINION

Choosing an au pair: As unease about nannies grows, Matthew Beard looks at the best way to find the right match for your family's needs. Page 19

Mind your language: The French have the Académie Française; do we need a language tsar to guard our grammar and expel foreign words? Page 19

Girls will be boys: Grace Bradley looks at the perennial masculine appeal of the pinstripe suit. Page 18

Blackboard jungle: Susan Elkin reports on the head of a girls' boarding school who spent a week teaching in an East London comprehensive. Page 39

Meeting needs: Enall Morris, an education minister, explains the proposals in the Green Paper that will help children with special needs. Page 39

Russia's democratic system may benefit if Yeltsin and the Government make a more serious attempt to work with the Duma rather than just trying to ride roughshod over it. Yet Yeltsin will be rightly seen as weak if he sacrifices a legislative agenda to which he has given his personal imprimatur. Page 20

Harold French, stage actor and director; Sir Reginald Murray, surgeon; Right Rev Robin Woods, Bishop of Worcester. Page 23

MATTERS OF FACT

Global warming: Van Dyck, Falklands; prostate cancer test; pub worship; propaganda. Page 21

TOMORROW

IN THE TIMES

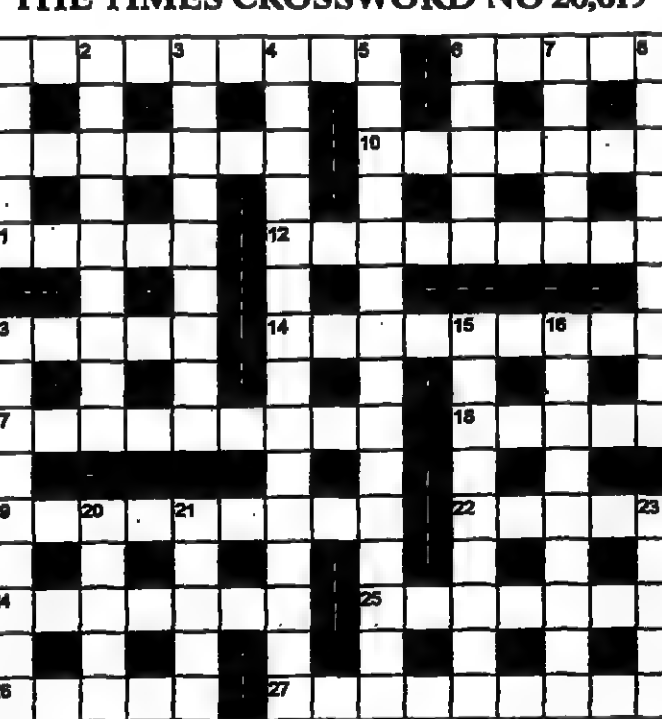
METRO

Oasis topped the All-time Album Poll... now you can win the Top 100 CDs, the Top 50 videos and the Top 30 books

WEEKEND

Elton John talks about his new gardens, which he values above all else

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,619



ACROSS

- Casual success comes to golden girl (2-4).
- Disconcerted by pronouncement (5).
- Piece of music with wrong tone for Becham, say (7).
- State musicians collected awards (7).
- Play receiving notice creep provided (5).
- Meat cut out, of course, protecting one carrying baby (9).
- Right in the head, but talk foolishly (5).
- Rheingold almost confused with name of another opera (9).
- Where to go for a good time — and when not to, perhaps (2,3,4).
- Minister found wartime bomb by vehicle (5).
- Top band appearing where ambassador lives? (9).
- Opens mouth, boasting about school subject (5).
- General reception in Rome for impostor, Kipling said (7).
- Florentine thus engaged containing fire (7).
- Church always providing comfort (5).
- After short break, pressing and coming back powerfully (9).
- End of tooth a little bent (5).
- What could matter be with nag, such as this one? (9).
- Flowing sea at point where charter party gathered (9).
- Bare interior to restore as a team (2,3,10).
- Torture on rack might create stir abroad (7,4,4).
- Board wants data neatly presented (5).
- Repetitive movement as north pole goes round and round (5).
- We're almost admitting novelist produces no central character (9).
- Looking to the future, support the revolutionary in charge (9).
- Plotter giving way to a raving lunatic (9).
- Getting one's own back (9).
- Ram switches feet, going to get up (5).
- Refuse modest cut (5).
- Lovable fool, perhaps (5).

DOWN

- End of tooth a little bent (5).
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- Getting one's own back (9).
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- Refuse modest cut (5).
- Lovable fool, perhaps (5).

Solution to Puzzle No 20,618

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3. KNOUL T A
4. EXECUTIVE ONSET
5. RAPS C E
6. YELLOW SCOOTER
7. EN PA
8. SEGMENT CHASSIS
9. O A I
10. ADORN PORCEMAIN
11. A O S A N C
12. PIRKSTAFF TASTE
13. B U E I E R
14. RAMP CLOSESHAVE

LATEST ROAD AND WEATHER CONDITIONS

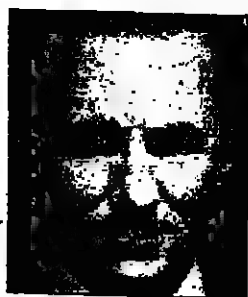
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Inside 123 0336 401 746
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Weather by Fax

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THE TIMES

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TODAY

ECONOMICS

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pupil-catching net
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SPORT

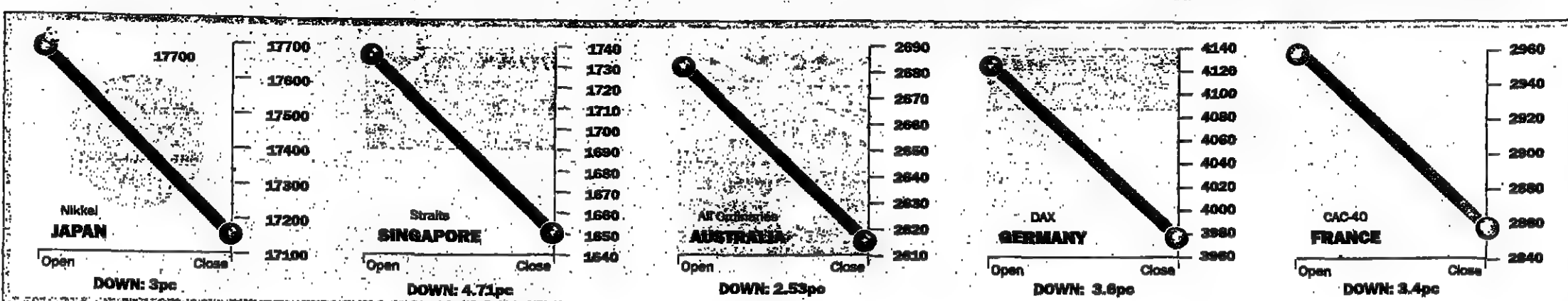
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judgment
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AND
RADIO
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BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

FRIDAY OCTOBER 24 1997

From the Far East, Australia and Europe, it's down all the way



Hong Kong turmoil heads West

Share prices in London and Wall Street join the retreat across the globe

BY OUR BUSINESS STAFF

THE collapse in share prices is expected to resume in London today after heavy overnight falls on Wall Street. The Dow Jones Industrial average lost more than 200 points in afternoon trading after the crash in Hong Kong stocks spilled over to global markets.

London traders had been hoping Wall Street would act as a prop to world markets. Instead, its lack of resilience added to the turmoil. Sharp price movements in London were exacerbated by the new computerised trading system. Sets, together with continuing reaction to the Government's poor handling of European monetary union.

City brokers gave a mixed reaction to the market turmoil. Martin Lupton, head of retail services at Dresner Kleinwort Benson, the broker, said: "The market was due a correction. The situation was exacerbated by the new order-driven system. I don't think its blown itself out yet. People are still a bit shell-shocked."

However, the crash was welcomed by PDM, the pension fund manager that has been criticised for shifting much of its portfolio into cash. PDM has taken a consistently bearish view about world stock market levels. A "greatly relieved" senior executive said: "Everything we have been expecting to happen is begin-

ning to happen." He expressed incredulity that some commentators were still arguing that the problems in Asia are a little local difficulty.

He added: "It's now one big financial market out there. Financial problems flow around the world. When there's dislocation in one market, it will have repercussions elsewhere."

The fund manager said PDM hopes the crash will continue. "It's been a great feeling for the last week or two. Our performance has turned around pretty dramati-

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Stock market Page 28
Temps Page 28
Financial fall-out Page 29

cally." PDM has not held any stake in HSBC Holdings, the bank which has recently lost 30 per cent of its value. Richard Jeffrey, economist at Charterhouse, the merchant bank, believes yesterday's shakeout goes deeper than the crisis in the Far East. He said: "Events may also have been prompted by City reaction to the health of the domestic economy. People are worried about it overheating and the market is now starting to react to this."

But it was not just the equity market which is likely to cause

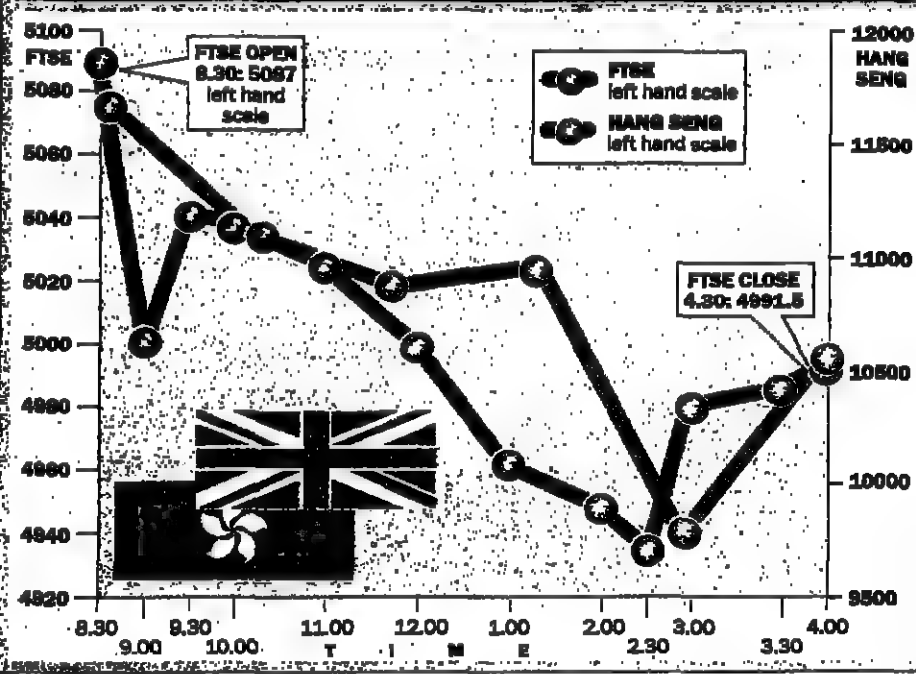
trouble for investors. The drop in gilt yields also gives cause for concern. Mr Jeffrey said: "Gilt is looking vulnerable. They are exposed to any bad news in the economy which may prompt the Governor of the Bank of England to raise interest rates."

Panic in London spilled over into Wall Street, with the Dow Jones Industrial average tumbling almost 180 points on opening. The Dow fell after trading closed in London, down nearly 230 points at one stage. In London, the FTSE 100 index was down 222 points before rallying to close 3 per cent down at 4,991.5.

Overnight the Hang Seng had tumbled a further 1,211 points to 10,426 as the crisis deepened, stretching the loss in the former colony so far this week to almost 25 per cent.

The crisis in Hong Kong saw HSBC toppled from its perch as the biggest UK company by market capitalisation. That crown now goes to BP, which saw its shares hit £23.47 earlier in the summer, hit a low of £15.40 before rallying to end 160p lower at £16.06.

What should have been Hong Kong's most sensational new share listing, the \$4 billion China Telecom (Hong Kong) issue, ended its first day at HK\$10.55 a share, down HK\$1.13 or 9.67 per cent from the issue price of HK\$11.68.



Markets fall around world

AT ITS nadir, the Hong Kong stock market was down 16 per cent at 9,767 before a modest recovery left the Hang Seng index 1,211.47 points lower at 10,426.30. It was the largest points loss in the market's history although in percentage terms the 10 per cent decline was eclipsed by the 33 per cent fall suffered in 1987 (Alasdair Murray writes).

The Hong Kong collapse had a domino effect across the globe. The Nikkei index in Tokyo slipped 3 per cent while Japanese stocks traded in London and New York continued to plummet after Tokyo's close. The market in Singapore fell by 5.43 per cent as overnight rates soared to 50 per cent to protect the beleaguered Singaporean dollar. Australia, which sells half of its exports to the Asian region, was also caught in the fallout. The All Ordinaries index slumped 68 points, or 2.53 per cent, to 2,614.9, while the Australian dollar also came under attack.

The FTSE 100 slumped 222 points before recovering slightly to finish down 157.3 points at 4,991.5. The London decline was matched in New York, and European markets were also engulfed in the worldwide trend despite few direct trade connections with Hong Kong. France's CAC-40 lost 3.42 per cent, while the Ibis-DAX in Frankfurt fell 3.6 per cent.

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET SERVICES
FTSE 100 4991.5 (-157.3)
Yield 3.27%
FTSE All shares 2267.80 (-68.82)
Nikkei 17131.55 (-528.06)
New York
Dow Jones 7888.78 (-148.87)
S&P Composite 954.23 (-14.17)

US RATE
Federal Funds 5.75% (5.75%)
Long Bond 6.89% (6.89%)
Yield 5.35% (5.42%)

EURO CURRENCY
3-month Interbank 7.75% (7.75%)
Life long gilt 118% (118%)

STERLING
New York 1.6315* (1.6318)
London 1.6315* (1.6318)

DM 1.6298 (1.6350)
FF 2.8825 (2.9127)
SP 9.5905 (9.7627)
CHF 2.3980 (2.4120)
Yen 198.43 (197.30)
£ Index 101.7 (102.2)

US\$ \$: 80.44*
£ \$: 1.6315* (1.6318)
DM \$: 2.8825 (2.9127)
FF \$: 9.5905 (9.7627)
CHF \$: 2.3980 (2.4120)
Yen \$: 198.43 (197.30)
£ \$: 101.7 (102.2)

Tokyo close Yen 121.48
Brent 15-day (Jan) 820.35 (820.30)
London close 822.35 (822.00)
* denotes midday trading price

Lanica's latest disposal nets £1

BY SARAH CUNNINGHAM

LANICA TRUST, the investment vehicle of Andrew Regan, the failed Co-op bidder, revealed yesterday that it has sold its last significant asset for £1.

It received the payment for its 55 per cent stake in the Select Catalogues mail order venture run with Naafi, the Armed Forces' trading division. Lanica bought into the venture for £162,500 last November.

It said that its relationship with Naafi had been soured by bad publicity, making it impossible for the two sides, who had planned an AIM flotation for Select, to agree on how to fund the business. As a result, Select risked insolvency and, Lanica claims, it was forced to sell its stake in Select for the £1 plus some deferred considerations if the business is sold, floated or makes a profit before 2001.

A spokesman for the company said that it was still trying to get its shares, which have been suspended since February, relisted. The Stock Exchange is believed to be reluctant to agree to this until a Serious Fraud Office investigation into a deal between the Co-op and Hobson, a company once run by Mr Regan, is complete.

The liquidator of Galileo — the company set up by Mr Regan for the £1.2 billion attempt earlier this year to take over the Co-operative Wholesale Society — said yesterday that he was still considering whether to take legal action against Hambros Bank for offering poor advice to Mr Regan during the bid.

BT boosted by MCI losses and WorldCom share price

FROM OLIVER AUGUST IN NEW YORK

MCI, the US telecoms group that is the subject of a three-way multi-billion-dollar battle involving BT, GTE and WorldCom, yesterday reported a third-quarter loss of \$383 million (£220 million).

The positions of GTE and BT in the fight were also strengthened when WorldCom's share price dropped below the critical \$34 mark. Below \$34, WorldCom will not pay the full \$41.50 per MCI share in its stock swap offer.

GTE is offering \$40 per share in cash. BT already owns a 20 per cent MCI stake and, under a scenario likely to be considered in negotia-

tions, could end up owning MCI jointly with GTE.

MCI reported profits of \$132 million in the quarter, excluding a \$515 million charge to cover losses in the local phone sector. Analysts had been predicting a figure just below the \$130 million mark and said the charge could be \$600 million.

An MCI spokesman said: "We exceeded expectations, and that just shows the underlying strength in our core businesses." MCI doubled earnings in Internet services, a sector in which GTE and WorldCom are very strong.

Douglas Maine, MCI's finance

director, gave warning that it could take another charge in the final quarter, but it would not be as high.

MCI and BT have signed confidentiality pacts with GTE and WorldCom in anticipation of one of their bids turning hostile. The MCI spokesman said: "We may not be in a friendly situation later. Someone could use confidential information we gave them against us."

Yesterday, the two suitors were on best behaviour at the first round of detailed negotiations. Sir Iain Vallance, the BT chairman, and Sir Peter Bonfield, chief executive, attended but would not comment.

Bank of England regional branches could go for £10m

BY JASON NISSE

INVESTORS who have always fancied themselves as the Governor of the Bank of England now have their chance. The Bank is advertising for sale four regional branches that it closed this year.

The properties — in Birmingham, Bristol, Manchester and Newcastle — include high-security bank vaults, plush offices and frontages proudly displaying the name "Bank of England". Their market value could exceed £10 million.

The regional branches hark back to the days when the Bank actually operated as a bank. Hundreds of businesses and high-net-worth indi-

viduals had accounts with the Bank, which had an extensive network of branches that also collected information about the economy of the regions.

However, the role of the Bank, which was nationalised in 1945, has changed in recent years. Today, most of the customers of the Bank are current and former employees.

Until the beginning of this decade the bank had seven branches. It sold its Liverpool and Southampton branches a couple of years ago. Last year it decided to change its regional network completely. All but the Leeds branch have now been closed,

to be replaced by a network of 12 regional agents, which maintain contacts with local businesses and provide information used by the Monetary Policy Committee to decide whether to put up interest rates.

The Leeds offices are being turned into a regional money centre, which will be used to distribute banknotes to banks in the north of England.

A Bank spokesman said that there had been a great deal of interest in the Birmingham and Bristol sites. "Bristol has the most amazing vaults," he said. "It would suit somebody with some high-security needs."

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BA plans to step up Gatwick services

By Jon Ashworth

BRITISH AIRWAYS is stepping up operations from London Gatwick next summer, introducing Boeing 777s on routes to America and creating nearly 500 new cabin crew and customer service jobs. Capacity at Gatwick will increase 25 per cent through the expansion, which will see new routes to holiday destinations in America, Latin America and the Caribbean. First class is being introduced on routes to Barbados, Orlando, Antigua, St Lucia, Grenada, the Seychelles and Mauritius. The programme is backed by a £12 million package of improvements, including extra check-in desks and baggage facilities. BA is expanding its arrangement with Airline Management Limited (AML), a joint venture with the Flying Colours leisure group, but will keep the 777s for its mainline BA fleet. AML, which took on the former British Caledonian routes, will fly DC10s made up in BA colours, carrying the BA flight prefix, and crewed by BA flight crew and AML cabin crew. AML will operate four weekly flights on behalf of BA to Kingston and Montego Bay. It will also operate new services to Cancun in Mexico, Puerto Plata in the Dominican Republic and Tobago. From February, BA 777s will replace DC10s to Dallas-Fort Worth, Atlanta and Bermuda. It had been speculated that BA was seeking to parcel out the rump of its holiday routes to a low-cost operator — part of the move to a so-called "virtual airline". This has been repeatedly denied by Bob Ayling, BA's chief executive, who said that yesterday's announcement "demonstrates yet again our commitment to Gatwick, and reinforces our strategy of developing the airport as a complementary hub to Heathrow".

Decline in lending by banks signals spending slowdown

By Alasdair Murray
Economics Correspondent

BANK lending to the personal sector fell sharply in September, providing further evidence that the pace of the consumer boom is slowing. Figures from the British Bankers Association (BBA) show total personal lending declined from £1.13 billion to £860 million while consumer credit lending slipped from £423 million in August to £136 million last month. Tim Sweeney, director-general of the BBA, said the

figures were difficult to assess because of reporting changes and the inclusion of newly converted banks, but appeared "noticeably weaker than of late".

The lending component of M4, the measure of broad money supply, also declined on an underlying basis — which excludes gilt repo transactions — from £7.7 billion in August to £2.1 billion last month.

But the overall growth rate of M4 accelerated unexpectedly, increasing 1 per cent between August and September

and pushing the annual rate from 11.6 per cent to 11.8 per cent — well above the Bank of England's former monitoring range of 3 to 9 per cent.

A new statistical collection system and a re-definition of some of the components of M4 and BBA data are causing distortions to the figures, leading the Bank of England to give a warning that the data will be prone to heavy revisions in the next few months.

Simon Bryson, director of research at Nikko Europe, said: "Allowing for the addition of the new banks, person-

al lending has fallen to by far the lowest level of the year." David Bloom, UK economist at James Capel, added that the distortions to the monetary data, combined with large one-off impacts on the most recent retail sales figures, had complicated the policy outlook for interest rates.

The BBA data show total bank lending increased from £2.23 to £2.58 billion although the latest figures included the Alliance & Leicester, Halifax and Woolwich banks for the first time.

But new data from the Building Societies Association (BSA) suggested that the housing market remains strong, despite a slight slowdown in September.

The value of new commitments slipped from £2.2 billion in August to £2.1 billion while the number of net new commitments fell from 31,000 to 26,000.

However, Adrian Coles, director-general of the BSA, said net advances were running at just 5 per cent less than last year despite the conversion of a number of leading building societies to banks.

EMU first wave 'too early for the banks'

A WARNING that the cost of converting computers to deal with European Monetary Union will be higher than that for dealing with the so-called millennium bug was issued by ICL, the technology group. This follows a survey of 87 British retail financial services companies that suggests only 4 per cent have actually prepared themselves for EMU, and that more than one-quarter had not started their preparations. Tim Escudier, president of the financial services side of ICL, will tell a conference on EMU at the Royal Institute of Institutional Affairs, that the UK's high street banks, building societies and insurance companies, simply would not have been able to cope if the UK had gone into EMU in the first wave. He will add that the financial cost of monetary union has largely been underestimated. ICL's research echoes recent comments by Barclays Bank, which concluded that British industry was not ready for early entry into EMU in 1999. US time bomb, page 30

Cadbury talks French

CADBURY SCHWEPPE, the soft drinks and confectionery company, is in talks to buy La Pie Qui Chante, the French sugar confectionery business based in Lille. La Pie Qui Chante is the second-largest sugar confectionery company in France, with sales of £342 million (about £5.9 million) in 1996. Cadbury said the purchase would make it third in the French sweet market and second in sugar confectionery. The French sweet market is the seventh-largest in the world.

News Corp buyback

THE News Corporation, the international media group whose interests include The Times, yesterday gave formal notice of its intention to buy back for cancellation up to a total of more than 200 million preference shares, costing a maximum of \$41.3 billion (about £57 million). News Corp said the buyback would be conducted over a six-month period and it reserves the right to announce a further buyback should it fail to acquire the proposed number of shares.

Banco di Roma bid fails

A £614 million bid by a Russian-led consortium for control of Banco di Roma, one of Italy's largest banks, has been rejected by IRI, the Italian state industrial holding company. However, the consortium, led by MES, a Russian oil and consumer goods group, was told it was welcome to take part in the forthcoming privatisation of the loss-making bank. MES is a joint-stock company with an annual turnover of more than £12 billion.

Thomas takes 'sabbatical'

WARD THOMAS, the chairman of Yorkshire-Tyne Tees Television, has decided not to become chairman of Granada Media Group, the recently merged Granada-Yorkshire business. Mr Thomas, 74, had earlier agreed to become GMG chairman. He has now decided that he wants a "sabbatical". In a letter to Charles Allen, Granada's chief executive, Mr Thomas said that he had been involved in television for so long that "I am sure I will want to return to the fray before long".

Cammell in yard talks

CAMMELL LAIRD, the shipbuilding group floated off on the stock market in July, revealed yesterday that it was in talks with the Government of Gibraltar to become the operator for the Gibraltar ship repair complex. John Stafford, chief executive of Cammell Laird, said they would look to develop the yard's activities into the cruise and ferry sectors, together with the conversion and repair of specialist vessels. Cammell Laird shares fell from 155p to 151p.

RTI seeks £5m at float

RTI, a loss-making Dublin company that has developed an easy-to-use keypad for retailers' point-of-sale systems, is seeking to raise £5 million for its sales drive by listing on the Alternative Investment Market. The PasKeyboard, which is being installed by Moss Bros, uses keys with built-in LCD panels offering cashiers and other users a changing series of options. RTI, which is being advised by English Trust, claims its keyboard speeds transaction processing and reduces training costs.

Building societies defeated over tax

By George Sivell

THREE building societies yesterday lost an £81.75 million tax battle with the Treasury in the European Court of Human Rights.

The National and Provincial, the Leeds Permanent and the Yorkshire Building Society claimed that a change in British tax law was illegal because it stopped them going to court to fight for tax refunds which had been granted to the Woolwich in an earlier case.

The Inland Revenue said it was "absolutely delighted with the outcome" and drew attention to a comment from the European Court that the changes in the law were clearly in line with Parliament's original intention.

The Woolwich successfully recouped £70 million from the Treasury because it claimed the money was a transitional tax wrongly levied through an anomaly between the British fiscal year and the former building society's account year. But by the time the other three societies followed suit, the law on how building society interest is taxed had been changed under the 1991 Finance Act and declared retroactive. Only societies that challenged the transitional arrangements before July 18, 1986, were allowed to pursue claims.

Finance director steps up to head Abbey National

By Richard Miles
Banking Correspondent

ABBEY NATIONAL yesterday named Ian Harley, its finance director, as successor to Peter Birch, its chief executive, who will retire next February.

Mr Harley, 47, joined the board in 1993 and has worked for the bank for 20 years. He said he would continue Mr Birch's strategy of expansion in the financial services market while reducing unit costs.

He also raised the prospect of returning up to £500 million of excess capital to shareholders. In the absence of an acquisition or rapid organic growth, Mr Harley said, he would not be opposed to a share buyback.

When Abbey National converted from a building society in 1989, its first-tier capital ratio, a regulatory measure of solvency, was 12.5 per cent. "Today it stands at 9 per cent, but I would like to reduce that further to 7.25 per cent by 1999," Mr Harley said. "That implies a surplus of between £500 million and £600 million."

Commenting on reports of Abbey National's aborted merger with NatWest earlier this year, Mr Harley said his bank would be concerned about losing its identity in such a big deal. However, he did not rule out acquisitions of his own, noting life assurance and retail fund management businesses as preferred targets. In its autumn trading state-



Abbey National's Peter Birch, left, and Ian Harley

ment, Abbey National said it had recovered some of its share of the mortgage market in the third quarter, after a sharp drop in new business in

the first half of the year. The bank also said the inflow of savings had improved with the end of lock-ins at converting building societies.

Final offer rejected by dockers

By George Sivell

THE long-running Mersey Docks dispute is to continue after the Liverpool workers rejected a final offer from the company of £28,000 each.

The Liverpool dockers voted by 213 to 97 in a secret postal ballot to turn down the money from the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company, and the offer of 40 jobs. The company, whose shares fell from 453p to 431p, said it would keep open the offer until Monday.

The dispute began in September 1995 after 329 dockers refused to cross a picket line mounted by employees of another company in the Port of Liverpool. Directors expect some of the men to accept after receiving an undisclosed number of phone calls from dockers yesterday, while recruitment will begin to fill some of the 40 vacancies.

Mersey Docks said: "There will be no further negotiations and the offer will be formally withdrawn. But we don't want to leave those individuals who wish to accept a settlement without a chance to get out of a hopeless situation."

A dockers' leader described the ballot result as a "great victory" and pledged that their campaign would go on.

Tempos, page 28

TOURIST RATES

	Bank Buy	Bank Sell
Australia \$	2.42	2.24
Austria Sch	21.35	19.70
Belgium F	36.48	37.28
Canada \$	2.38	2.20
Cyprus Cyp	0.884	0.823
Denmark Kr	11.40	10.71
Finland Mk	9.19	8.44
France Fr	10.16	9.38
Germany Dm	3.06	2.81
Greece Dr	461	442
Hong Kong \$	13.43	12.23
India Rs	50.2	47.8
Ireland Pt	1.17	1.06
Israel Shk	8.06	5.43
Italy Lit	2002	1950
Japan Yen	213.13	195.80
Malta	0.671	0.612
Netherlands Gld	3.465	3.155
New Zealand \$	2.77	2.59
Norway Kr	12.27	11.35
Portugal Esc	302.53	284.50
S Africa Rd	8.42	7.48
Spain Ptas	282.29	286.50
Sweden Kr	13.21	12.11
Switzerland Fr	2.85	2.53
Turkey Lira	3081.87	2893.08
USA \$	1.73	1.58

Rates for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to traveller's cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

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A PRIZE DRAW THE TIMES

FOUR FABULOUS CARS TO BE WON



This month The Times has teamed up with The Sunday Times and Churchill Insurance to offer readers the chance to win one of four exciting cars worth around £20,000 each.

The Lotus Elise, above, is one of the most exciting cars of recent years, technically innovative with fabulous styling and incredible handling.

The Free-Steer Lotus Elise is the perfect blend of an off-roader but the practicality and easy driving of a saloon. The VR6 is the racier Volkswagen Golf of them all, easy to handle with black leather interior, and the space is for serious weekend drivers. Great powered for maximum fuel savings on long journeys with flexible seating space.

Prizes are available until the unlikely event that all four cars are won. The prize pool will be reduced by £20,000 for each car won. On the 24th October 1997, the prize pool will be £80,000. On the 24th November 1997, the prize pool will be £40,000. On the 24th December 1997, the prize pool will be £20,000. The prize pool will be £0 on the 24th January 1998. The prize pool will be £0 on the 24th February 1998. The prize pool will be £0 on the 24th March 1998. The prize pool will be £0 on the 24th April 1998. The prize pool will be £0 on the 24th May 1998. The prize pool will be £0 on the 24th June 1998. The prize pool will be £0 on the 24th July 1998. The prize pool will be £0 on the 24th August 1998. The prize pool will be £0 on the 24th September 1998. The prize pool will be £0 on the 24th October 1998. The prize pool will be £0 on the 24th November 1998. The prize pool will be £0 on the 24th December 1998. The prize pool will be £0 on the 24th January 1999. 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Made in Hong Kong



COMMENTARY

by our City Editor

Don't count on that crash just yet. The chances still are that fund managers who backed London shares at the start of 1997 will end the year looking smarter than those who waited with increasing desperation for things to go wrong.

Western stock markets have been in a state for weeks. That tenth anniversary of the 1987 crash means nothing but made it impossible to ignore the fact that shares have again grown overvalued in New York, London and much of continental Europe.

Overvalued, that is, by their own historic standards. Corporate America has been selling at 26 times its annual profits after a long continuous expansion, and corporate Britain at 20 times earnings six years after the recession. Investors had adjusted to lower interest rates as inflation was pricked. The debate, still far from settled, is whether profits can still keep rising ahead.

In this atmosphere, any sound of breaking glass is guaranteed to jangle the markets' collective nerves. It is liable to set off a "correction" that could end up somewhere wholly incorrect.

The Asian tiger crisis in August tested the nerves but the Western markets held. Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur were a long way off and their problems had little echo here. Hong Kong was always different. It is a more mature market, with closer links to the West, to the extent that HSBC tops both the FTSE 100

and Hang Seng indices. With Tokyo locked in its own gloom, an Eastern threat was only likely to filter West via Hong Kong.

Now the territory's dollar parity, which attracted support from George Soros a few weeks ago, has been challenged and the territory's market-wise bosses have reacted with as much bluster as Malaysia's nationalists. Beijing will not have been amused to see its flagship launch of China Telecom shares end 10 per cent down on their first day.

The battle will be costly, especially if high money costs last long enough to puncture a bloated property market. Having triggered a rethink, however, Hong Kong's affairs should not affect the West much further.

The calculation here is now about the extent and timing of further rises in German and American interest rates, and the ability of firms to keep growing earnings without ever more dubious deals. Across the Channel, Frankfurt and related markets have been waiting for the drop, having failed to regain earlier peaks in recent upswings.

In London, the FTSE 100's next stop for reflection should be around 4,800, making a 10 per cent drop from the recent 5,330 peak, but less than 4 per cent from here. In New York, the Dow is testing August support levels. If the bears take hold, and start interpreting news negatively, a heavy correction could take the blue-chip average down a further 20 per cent by year-end.

Even if that happens, investors in the US market would break even on the year. And the point of such corrections is to avoid long bear markets, allowing shares to resume a more stately progress.

Underground movement

In South Yorkshire yesterday, there was the whiff of rebellion. At a conference on the future of the coal industry, it became apparent that more than a few Labour MPs may be brave enough to push the Government to support the coal industry.

It is hardly likely to force a change of the policy so eloquently defined by the Energy Minister John Birt earlier this week, when he said that the problems facing Britain's biggest pit owner, Richard Budge, were all his own.

Since ministers happily have their seats in constituencies unencumbered with mines, the Cabinet may share his lack of sympathy. Those MPs connected with mining constituencies may feel it politic with the folks back home to make a fuss, but, with an election several years away, their chance of influencing government policy is negligible.

But just how deeply into the clothes of the Tory party can new Labour struggle before the seams begin to split? This week we learned that the Commonwealth Development Corporation is to be privatised. Not all the shares will be sold; there will be a golden share as a token of respect towards preserving this most

well-intentioned organisation from the worst ravages of capitalism, but, however disguised, the plan is for partial privatisation.

Since the CDC is not an organisation close to the hearts of old Labour, or most voters of any complexion, shunting it into the private sector could be done without too much hostility.

More intriguing is the reaction that might greet any attempt to do the same with the London Underground. But the Government faces a pressing problem with the transport system which is crucial to keeping the capital functioning. The Underground has been deprived of adequate investment for decades and, with huge amounts of resources now having to be diverted into the Jubilee Line Extension, its need for new money is reaching crisis point. Currently, like CDC, London Underground is prohibited from going into the market and borrowing the cash it needs so it is working hard to tie up

fashionable PFI deals to fund such essentials as ticketing machines. Very soon, however, the Government will have to determine a structure which will allow the organisation to have the capital injection it needs for survival. Partial privatisation is one possibility. How would that go down with the South East's crop of Labour MPs?

Barclays deal is too much to credit

They may not be the happiest of couples at the moment but rumours of a split between Lord Alexander of Weedon and Derek Wanless seem wide of the mark. According to the gossip, the chairman and chief executive of NatWest are in various stages of distress, ranging from not speaking to each other to being on the brink of committing boardroom har-kiri.

Temporary disagreements as they try to sort out NatWest's problems seem likely, if not inevitable, but these two now stand or fall as a team and their investors seem prepared to give them a few months more to do either. Chips Kruger has been

charged with finding a strategy for NatWest Markets and the likelihood is that he will continue carving off bits on the Barclays model, with international debt management, although it cost the bank dearly in terms of cash and reputation last year, remaining with the group.

The main focus of attention, however, is likely to be on the core banking business, where NatWest is strong and will want to get stronger via the addition, perhaps, of a demutualised building society since its talks with Prudential came to naught.

But surely we can forget talk of a deal with Barclays. Together they would account for almost half the small business clients in the country, a third of all current accounts and around 40 per cent of credit cards issued. Those figures would be a formidable obstacle to put before the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

Putting the Boots in

INNOCENT retailers will be reaching for the smelling salts today when they learn of dreadful goings on in north London. Apparently Safeway, Boots and even the saintly John Lewis Partnership were furtive backers of a campaign to stop Sainsbury winning planning permission for a new superstore in the area. Their concerns were, of course, entirely environmental. But when a market reaches saturation point, things can turn nasty.

ICI pursues switch in its chemical mix

By PAUL DURMAN

IMPERIAL Chemical Industries intends to make further progress in disposing of industrial chemicals businesses in the next six months as it continues its switch towards more profitable areas, such as flavourings and fragrances.

City estimates suggest that ICI may be able to raise £2.5 billion as it withdraws from areas such as ethylene, methanol, chlorines and fertilisers. The methanol business, centred on ICI's Billingham plant, is thought to be a priority after being hit by production problems recently.

In its first results since completing the £5 billion purchase of Unilever's specialty chemicals businesses, ICI reported virtually unchanged third-quarter pre-tax profits of £132 million before exceptional items. Profits would have been up 8 per cent but for damage done by the strength of the pound, which cut almost £50 million from third-quarter trading profits.

Sir Ronald Hampel, chairman, said the specialty division, which takes in ICI's existing performance chemicals business, made a strong contribution of £95 million.

Profits from National Starch were well up on last year, and profits were significantly up at Quest, another business bought from Unilever.

The nine-month total for ICI's pre-tax profits is £292 million, down from £498 million last year. However, the results also include one-off profits of £478 million, mostly from the gain on the £1 billion sale of ICI Australia. The company also made a £23 million profit on selling its Millbank headquarters. However, it incurred £31 million of charges because of the rapid refinancing of the borrowing facilities arranged to pay for the Unilever acquisition.

Coatings, which includes the Dulux paints business, made unchanged quarterly trading profits of £53 million. It would have seen a 12 per cent rise but for currencies.

The polyester and textile businesses, being sold to DuPont of the US, remained unprofitable in difficult markets.

Sir Ronald said that benefits of ICI's shift towards market-driven activities needing less capital were increasingly clear.

Times, page 28

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SAS EuroClass.

THE SCANDINAVIAN VIEWPOINT



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Jens Davidsson, Air Steward



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The SAS EuroClass lounge is designed so that you can work or relax, or do both, in comfort. The lounge offers everything from food and refreshments to newspapers and magazines - and individual work stations with phone and fax facilities - all in peaceful Scandinavian surroundings.



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SAS EuroClass passengers can enjoy Scandinavian World Cooking, a completely new concept in airborne cuisine, based on fresh Scandinavian ingredients prepared in the culinary traditions of other cultures. On intercontinental flights, you can choose from a wide selection of courses on the steward's trolley. We can assure you that quality is a tradition in our kitchens, as shown by the fact that SAS is one of the few airlines in the world to be a member of the prestigious Chaine de Rotisseurs.



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SCANDINAVIAN AIRLINES

Canadian Overseas Packaging Industries Limited

Notice of the Thirty-Sixth Annual Meeting of Shareholders

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Thirty-Sixth Annual Meeting of Shareholders of Canadian Overseas Packaging Industries Limited will be held at Suite 3500, 1 Place Ville Marie, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3B 4M4 on Tuesday the 2nd day of December 1997 at 11:30 a.m. for the following purposes:

1. to receive and consider the report of the Directors and the consolidated financial statements of the Corporation and its subsidiaries for the year ended June 30, 1997 together with the report of the Auditors;
2. to elect Directors;
3. to appoint Auditors and to authorize the Directors to fix their remuneration; and
4. to transact such other business as may be recommended at an Annual Meeting.

Shareholders who are unable to attend the foregoing meeting are requested to complete and return their form of proxy to the appropriate address at least 48 hours before the time appointed for the holding of the said meeting.

Declaration of Dividend
The Directors have declared the following dividend payable to Shareholders registered at the close of business on November 14, 1997:
Common Shares -
Dividend No 38
75 Canadian cents per share for the year to June 30, 1997. (1996-70 Canadian cents).
The payment date for the dividend will be December 5, 1997. This dividend will be paid in the customary currency, related to the registered address of a Shareholder, in accordance with the by-laws of the Corporation.

October 24, 1997
By order of the Board
M.C. JOHNSTON O.C.
Director and Secretary
Registered Office Mailing Address:
Suite 1212, One Bonaventure Square,
Montreal, Quebec,
Canada H3B 4M4

Millennium and EMU will hurt, says Reuters

By RAYMOND SNOODY
MEDIA EDITOR

REUTERS, the news and information group, said it would face a double blow in the next couple of years - from the "imperatives" of both the millennium bug and European monetary union.

The company said yesterday it was unable to say precisely what the cost would be although it will clearly be significant. Peter Job, chief executive, said in a trading statement for the third quarter that the millennium and EMU were "likely to require significant diversion of effort to upgrade some products and phase out older ones".

Although the millennium time bomb will partly be used as an opportunity to introduce new systems, a high proportion of the 400,000 Reuter terminals in the marketplace will require modification.

The effect of EMU is less clear cut. Some business will contract; at least in the short-term as some currencies disappear, but there could be an upsurge in trading in the euro against the dollar and other leading currencies.

Underlying third-quarter revenue rose 8 per cent, compared with the same period last year. Actual revenue fell 3 per cent to £713 million (£736 million) mainly because of the strong pound. The nine-month figure showed similar features. Underlying growth was 8 per cent but actual growth fell 2 per cent to £2.12 billion (£2.17 billion).

Times, page 28

Brown should ignore the EMU prophets of doom

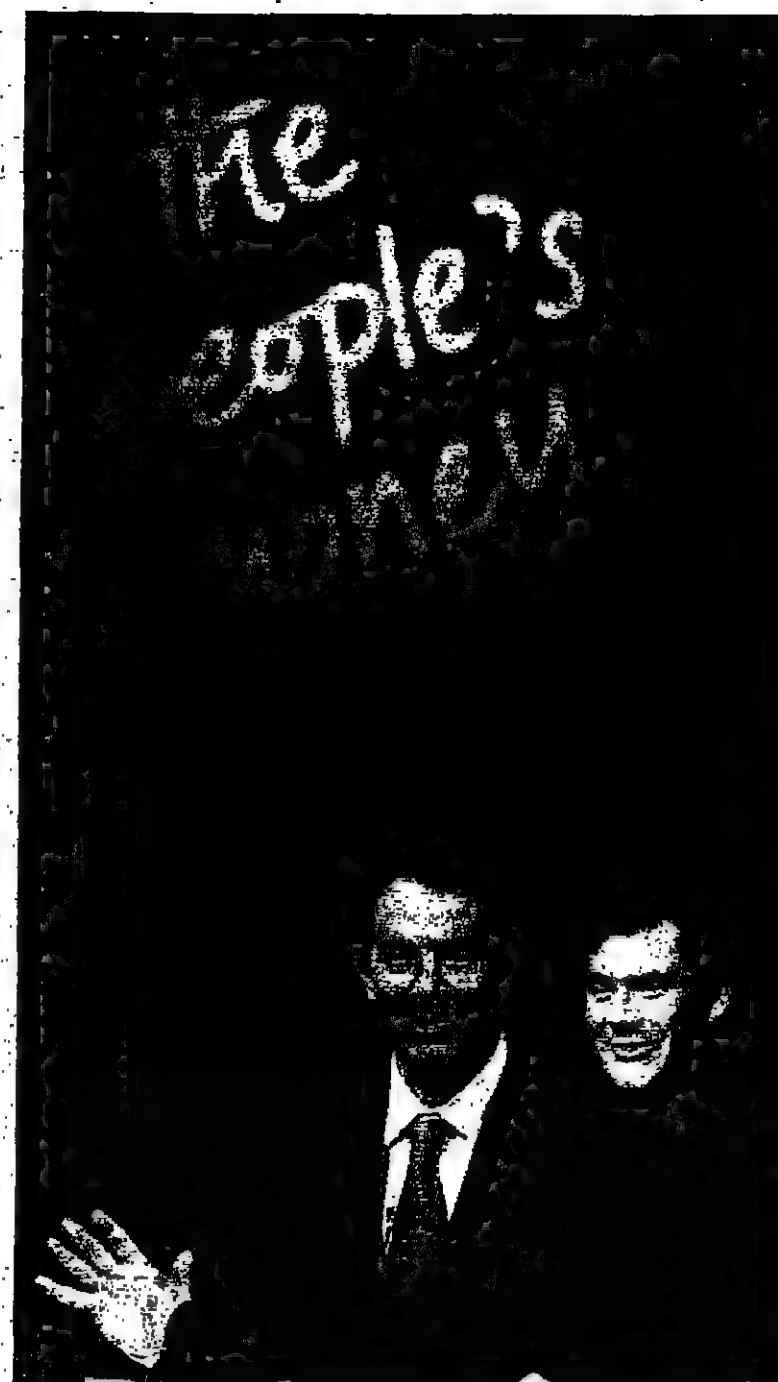
If Britain opts out of monetary union until 2002, it is not going to hurt UK manufacturers or financial markets

As Gordon Brown puts the finishing touches to the historic announcement ruling out British membership of the European monetary union during the present Parliament, he must withstand one final rearguard campaign to force him to change his mind. A motley collection of trade unionists, business lobbyists, EU officials and Downing Street Euro-enthusiasts, perhaps led by Peter Mandelson himself, is bombarding the Chancellor with all kinds of warnings about the damage that Britain would suffer by staying out of EMU until 2002. This scaremongering is unlikely to shift the policy agreed by Mr Brown and the Prime Minister last week — to stay out of EMU for the rest of this Parliament, while laying the groundwork for possible entry after 2002. This misinformation may, however, arouse anxieties among many voters and businessmen. I will therefore try to refute below the three prophecies of doom heard most often. But first let me focus on the rather narrow issue that is now at stake.

The question that Mr Brown has to answer next week — and the one that has provoked the barrage of propaganda against him — is not whether Britain should turn its back on EMU forever. It is whether Britain will lose anything by opting out of the single currency for the first three years and then taking a considered decision on EMU after an election in 2001 or 2002. The macroeconomic issues about interest rates and exchange rates have often been discussed in this column. (Anthony Harris will give some of his insights on arguments about EMU and the economic cycle in next week's Economic View.) For the present I want to concentrate on the industrial and institutional claims often made about delaying the decision on EMU.

British industry may suffer discrimination in EMU markets and foreign investors could be deterred by this danger.

The obvious and, in my view, conclusive rebuttal, is that exporters from Germany and France would lose far more than those based in Britain from any fragmentation of the European single market (since Britain buys from more goods from the Continent than it exports). This argument was discussed in detail on this page on January 31. In the present debate, which relates only to the timing of possible EMU entry, the scares about protectionism are even easier to dispel. Other European governments would not dream of breaking up the single market to punish Britain (along with Sweden and Denmark) simply for waiting until 2002. Such impatience would cost Germany and French multinationals dearly, since they are big inward investors in Britain. Punitive measures would also make sceptical British and Nordic voters even more suspicious of joining EMU after 2002. In any case, neither European leaders nor international businessmen would be in the least surprised if the Government ruled out EMU membership



Tony Blair and Gordon Brown have stated their position on EMU.

ship before 2002. This was exactly the policy that almost everyone expected of Labour both before and after the election — until a phantom change of policy was "discovered" by the *Financial Times*. It is hard to see why either investors or politicians should suddenly alter their long-term strategies because a rumour that was never true, nor even plausible, is finally denied.

A further argument, based on the present economic conjuncture, must also be borne in mind. As a time when the pound is too high for comfort and monetary policy is being tightened to restrain economic growth, it is not clear that Britain needs more foreign investment. Creating conditions for efficient investment is always desirable, but over the next few years, with the economy threatened more by overheating than by unemployment, there is no reason for British policy to be distorted to pander to the irrational fears of a tiny minority of investors from America or Japan.

By being out at the start, Britain will lose influence over initial decisions about how the single currency will operate.

Yes, but this hardly matters. All the important decisions about the single currency rules have already been taken.

The convergence criteria, the restrictions on national tax policies under the Stability Pact, and, above all, the anti-democratic statutes of the European Central Bank have all been irrevocably settled. The only debates to come are about personnel appointments and monetary techniques.

By missing out on the 1999 start, Britain will lose the chance to lobby for a British to get one of the three remaining places on the ECB's executive board. (The presidency, vice-presidency and one of the four executive positions have already been stitched up by Germany, The Netherlands and France.) But so what? All appointees to the ECB will, in any case, be forbidden by law from heeding the views of their national governments or even representing the interests of their home countries. And if Britain does eventually join EMU, the Governor of the Bank of England will anyway have a vote on the ECB board (although he, too, will be expressly forbidden from representing Britain's national interest).

Regarding the conduct of monetary policy, there are three technical issues still to be resolved. Should banks in EMU be forced to hold reserves on the German model? Should the ECB aim for an inflation target (like the Bank of

England) or a money-supply target (like the Bundesbank)? And how should banks based outside EMU be treated in the euro settlement system and the market operations of the ECB? These are questions of limited significance to the general public. In any case, they are already near to resolution. The Bundesbank is absolutely insistent that banks will be forced to hold involuntary reserves and a lone vote for liberalism from Britain would not have the slightest impact on this determination. The ECB will operate an "eclectic" approach, involving both monetary and inflation targets. The vexed question of "access" will probably be settled by international banks creating subsidiaries domiciled in Luxembourg or Dublin but managed from Tokyo, Zurich, New York — or London.

But surely the City will lose out in the competition with other European financial centres.

This is perhaps the strangest argument of all, especially when it comes from trade unionists who have never before suggested that guaranteeing the prosperity of millionaire merchant bankers should become a national political goal. It is true that financial services are potentially more vulnerable to discriminatory treatment than manufacturers. They are easier to control through non-tariff barriers. And other European economies are less dependent on finance than Britain, implying that restrictions would be less of a self-inflicted wound than they would be in the case of manufacturing trade. Nevertheless, there is very little danger that the City would suffer from delaying a British decision until 2002. International banks, like other rationally managed international companies, have long based their business strategies on the assumption that Britain would remain outside EMU until 2002. Why then have they been buying businesses and hiring financiers voraciously in London? And why have German banks been among the biggest investors in London? Because they are convinced that the City will become even more dominant as the financial centre of the European time-zone after monetary union. EMU will squeeze such purely national financial centres as Milan, Madrid and Paris. Financial activity will be concentrated in the place with the most favourable operating conditions and the largest pool of skills. That place will be London, not Frankfurt, and this will be true (at least in the next few years) whether Britain is in or out of the first EMU wave. The flood of foreign capital into London has in fact been so intense that almost no British-owned banks are left in the City for Brussels to discriminate against. In the unlikely event that EMU countries did try to act against the City, their main victims would now be companies based in America, Germany, Japan, The Netherlands, Switzerland and France.

Money moves so readily across national boundaries that financial centres often thrive best outside the currency zones they serve. Zurich has always been a more important financial centre than Frankfurt and nobody seems to doubt that companies such as Union Bank of Switzerland or Zurich Insurance will prosper after EMU, even though they are based outside the EU, never mind the single currency zone. In Hong Kong, by contrast, we now see a fascinating and predictable example of a financial centre collapsing on absorption into the national economy (China) that it used to serve from the outside. Tony Blair has suggested that he wants to make Britain the Hong Kong to Europe. Let us hope that he means pre-1997 Hong Kong.

Street. They have one distinct advantage over our own system. They are more likely to work.

Stamp duty

FUNNY, the hobbies and pastimes quietly enjoyed by some surprising people. And rather reassuring that we are not all driven workaholics with no time for anything else in our lives, the ones who are the real sad Nigels if you ask me. (Remind me one day to tell you about the highly successful accountant who is building a scale model of Llandudno railway station in his spare bedroom.) Anyway, the chief cashier of the Bank of England and the man with the most famous signature in the country is a keen stamp collector.

Graham Kentfield, who is also a deputy director at the Bank, today opens COLLECT '97 at Olympia, the fair for people who collect things, sponsored by Stanley Gibbons. "I believe that collecting is a basic human instinct. It is a) interesting and b) entirely harmless," he will reassure the collected collectors.

PLENTY of takers for a series of special initiatives from the South African Government designed to lure investors to the country's Industrial Development Zones. According to an advertisement in the Financial Times they include "a six-year tax holiday". Think of it.

UK companies left reeling by financial fall-out in Far East

Richard Miles and Jon Ashworth on Hong Kong's response to the crisis

The financial crisis that has swept across most of South East Asia reached the shores of Hong Kong this week — and left many British companies reeling in its wake.

Some of the biggest names in British industry and finance — HSBC Holdings, Cable & Wireless, Schroders — have seen their share price tumble in the past week because of heavy exposure to Hong Kong investments.

With a dual listing in both London and the former colony, HSBC, owner of Midland Bank, has arguably suffered the most. Its shares dropped by as much as £2 yesterday, before bouncing back to close 150p off at 1,610p. The crisis, which has seen the Hang Seng Index shed almost a third of its value since Monday, has topped HSBC from its perch as the biggest UK company by market capitalisation.

HSBC derived 80 per cent of its 1996 pre-tax profits from its Hong Kong business based on lending to commerce and on residential properties. As of last year, 87 per cent of its assets were in the territory. Because of the intimate relationship between property and the stock market — 60 per cent of listing companies have earnings linked to property — HSBC is in a catch 22 situation, say analysts.

The fear is that if interest rates in the former colony remain high or rise further, it will plunge Hong Kong into recession and put a large dent in HSBC's future profits. Conversely, if the Hong Kong authorities drop the peg with the US dollar — and they are refusing to do so at the moment — that will have just as damaging impact on the company's business. Two thirds of its shares are listed in the former colony.

"HSBC is stuffed both ways," said one banking analyst. He forecast that the group could face as much as a 20 per cent drop in pre-tax profits if the Hong Kong crisis turns into a recession, or the peg with the dollar goes. "Those brokers who have been advising their clients to buy HSBC in the past few weeks have landed them with heavy losses. And this is not the end."

Martin Green, a banking analyst with Merrill Lynch, the US investment bank, puts the possible damage of a currency devaluation much lower, perhaps at 12 per cent if one assumes the HK dollar is devalued 30 per cent. But he concedes that the figure could be anything in current conditions, as the shock waves rippled out into Europe and Wall Street.

HSBC, like the other so-called colonial bank Standard Chartered, was putting a brave face on its plight last night. The bank pointed out that the 800 million 75p shares it issued on its takeover of Midland in 1991 are, even after this week's events, still worth more than £16, though this is far short of its peak of £23.47 in late August.

Standard Chartered's shares held up a little better, coming off 26.5p to close at 689.5p yesterday. Tim Halford, a director, pointed out that the 35 per cent of pre-tax profits that come from the region stem mainly from mortgage lending, where it has a 10 per cent market share. Because buyers can only borrow up to 70 per cent of a property's value, the housing market has to fall by about 40 per cent before defaults occur in great numbers. "We have almost never had a default," he said.

This week's losses have also to be offset against rising property values since the beginning of the year. Geoff Palmer, an analyst with Credit Suisse First Bos-

The perception among locals is that, by Christmas, it will be a thing of the past

ton in Hong Kong, reckons office space has increased in value 30 per cent and residential property 15 per cent. Most of those gains will now be wiped out, leaving people no worse off than at the year's start.

Other banks caught up in the storm are Schroders, which last year derived 15 per cent of its earnings from the Far East, and Robert Fleming through Jardine Fleming, its 50/50 joint venture with Jardine Matheson. Schroders' shares dropped by £1, to £18.25. Telecoms group Cable & Wireless was also singled out as possible casualty because it derives 60 per cent of profits from its majority stake in Hong Kong Telecom.

According to pooled figures, about 1.6 per cent of pension fund investments are likely to be focused on Hong Kong, although this was based on a Hang Seng of near 15,000, and the market falls will have reduced the weighting to nearer 1 per cent. Total exposure could run to £60 billion.

After Britain's handover, financial fireworks

Numbers up

KEEP an eye on comings and goings at Camelot. The lottery operator has won its High Court case for the return of documents that blew the gaff on those 40 per cent bonus payments leaked to *Marketing Week* in May. These caused an awful stink and pressure on the Government to take the job off the fat cats. Camelot's affidavit makes interesting reading. Peter Murphy, finance director, claims: "It is clear from the material to which the unidentified source had access that he or she must have operated at a high level within the organisation or has access to those who are working at that high level." In other



And moving in from the east, a large depression over the City

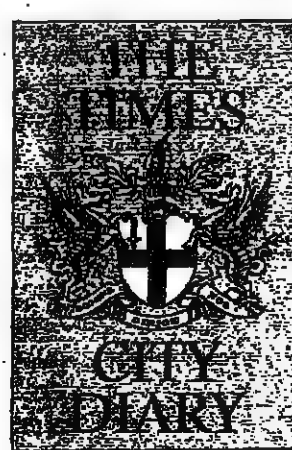
words, a director, or a minion with a grudge.

The affidavit also reveals that Neil Dickens, the hawk-eyed director of security, carried out a wide-ranging inquiry that showed the internal documents that were leaked came from within the company. Well I never. The documents were marked, making it easy to identify from whose desk they leaked. So if a senior Camelot executive finds compelling reason to make an abrupt career move shortly, we will know why.

I HAVE this on good authority, but I am still not sure I believe it. Two months ago The Times carried a horrible picture from Tehran of the execution of a serial killer, hanged by a mobile crane in front of 20,000 onlookers. The agency that took the photo has been contacted by the (British) maker of the crane, which had better remain nameless. Brilliant picture — could they have a copy for their office wall? Perhaps they could put it in their sales brochure too — 100 things you never knew you could do with our products?

Civil remedy

THE clearest indication yet that the Government is serious



about cracking down on insider trading, from Alistair Darling, Chief Secretary to the Treasury. Speaking to the International Equity Dealers Association yesterday, he described the current law, based on criminal action that hardly ever gets a result because of the impossible burden of proof needed, as "worse than useless".

He promised "explicit powers" for the new City super-regulator Whose Name Dare Not Be Spoken to ensure that the City was properly run. He also promised that these powers will be included in the new Financial Services Bill a couple of years hence.

My informant at the meeting, someone so blameless in his professional conduct that he can have no possible axe to grind, said most present took this to mean a switch to the sort of civil remedies in use on Wall

Street. They have one distinct advantage over our own system. They are more likely to work.

Stamp duty

FUNNY, the hobbies and pastimes quietly enjoyed by some surprising people. And rather reassuring that we are not all driven workaholics with no time for anything else in our lives, the ones who are the real sad Nigels if you ask me. (Remind me one day to tell you about the highly successful accountant who is building a scale model of Llandudno railway station in his spare bedroom.) Anyway, the chief cashier of the Bank of England and the man with the most famous signature in the country is a keen stamp collector.

Graham Kentfield, who is also a deputy director at the Bank, today opens COLLECT '97 at Olympia, the fair for people who collect things, sponsored by Stanley Gibbons. "I believe that collecting is a basic human instinct. It is a) interesting and b) entirely harmless," he will reassure the collected collectors.

PLENTY of takers for a series of special initiatives from the South African Government designed to lure investors to the country's Industrial Development Zones. According to an advertisement in the Financial Times they include "a six-year tax holiday". Think of it.

Soft cell

FOR sheer brass neck, I think this one beats them all. Robert Feld, the former Resort Hotels boss currently serving eight years for fraud, has just been moved from Wandsworth Prison to more salubrious premises near Woking. Ever keen to keep in touch with his professional contacts in the outside world, Feld has just sent out the following Printaprint-style change of address card: "Robert Feld's postal address with effect from 14 October 1997 has changed to Her Majesty's Prison, Coldingly."

MARTIN WALLER



Robert Feld's cup of woe has been sweetened with a change of address

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Coal poised to spark showdown between new and old Labour

THE first showdown between new and old Labour is imminent and the battleground is Britain's coalfields.

In the Yorkshire coalfields, which suffered devastation under the Conservative Government, outrage over the Labour Government's attitude to coal is mounting. In a few days it will spill into Westminster when MPs and coal unions confront John Battle, Energy Minister, and Michael Meacher, Environment Minister,

over what is being done to protect 50,000 jobs in the coal industry. The political temperature over coal is rising because critical contracts with the electricity generators are being negotiated. Environmental commitments threaten to restrict the use of coal as a fuel, which increasingly is being replaced by gas.

As many as 80 MPs are thought likely to join a powerful backbench alliance. They want to move coal up the political agenda and want clear

signs that the Government has an energy policy. The alliance came together yesterday at a Coalfields Communities Campaign meeting at Kellingley colliery near Wakefield, South Yorkshire.

The Government was condemned for distancing itself from

the coal industry. The Rev John Roden, industrial chaplain for coal areas in Selby, said the Government's position on energy policy was pathetic. "There is widespread disillusionment - 95 per cent of miners voted for a Labour Government. I doubt if they will again."

John Grogan, MP for Selby, said the coal industry had modernised, cut costs and was competing in a flexible market. "This is an industry that New Labour should be proud of." He is to petition Tony Blair for an urgent review of energy. "We've got reviews of

everything else - from sport on TV to cats and dogs - why do we have nothing on energy?"

The first pit closure under Labour was expected to be contentious. But the shutdown of RJB's Asfordby colliery in August coincided with a parliamentary recess. A bumper ride for the increasingly hands-off Government is promised when the Commons returns. The pressure coming from the heartland of old Labour goes straight to the core of the divide between the

Government and its traditional party roots.

Pressure from constituency MPs will be intense with 20,000 direct jobs in the coal industry and a further 30,000 in related services. But with no coalfields in ministers' seats those who will have the final say over the industry's future will be spared awkward questions at home. Whether they can avoid politically awkward questions about what Labour promised and is delivering is another matter.

Battle sets up review of electricity pool system

BY GEORGE SIVELL

THE Government yesterday launched a review of the controversial electricity pool, which sets wholesale electricity prices.

Shares in PowerGen fell 54p to 677p, National Power fell 49p to 487p and British Energy fell 31p to 375p. Analysts, however, said the reaction may be a little overdone and that a radical shake-up of the generating industry was unlikely as a result.

Big industrial customers have blamed the pool for causing huge spikes in electricity prices at times of peak use, which has forced some large companies to build their own generating plant.

John Battle, Minister for Science, Energy and Industry, said he has initiated a full review of the way wholesale electricity prices are set in England and Wales, including how the electricity pool works.

He said that he was responding to "criticisms that the pool sets prices that are too high" and that its operations "are not sufficiently open to be visibly above board". Mr Battle added: "We need to see whether the present system, which is so central in setting prices, can be improved to benefit the electricity industry

and millions of customers in businesses and at home."

Stephen Littlechild, Director-General of Ofst, the industry regulator, is to draw up terms of reference. Mr Battle said he expects a review to begin next year so it will not interfere with introducing competition between suppliers delivering electricity to homes.

Mr Battle went on: "The time has come to look again at the way electricity is traded since the pool is not now the only model in the world. We can learn from the experience of other countries, such as Norway's nordpool."

He added: "When the pool was conceived in 1990, it was set up almost in a vacuum. There were no other models to draw on, no experience of a deregulated electricity market in the UK, and the centralised system of the old Central Electricity Generating Board was in full swing."

The design had performed well in many respects with prices coming down and 23 new independent power producers entering the market, he said. "And yet there is still criticism of the pool. Consumers complain that pool prices are too high; that it is a suppliers' club..."



Gerry Francis, left, Spurs manager, with Les Ferdinand, signed for £6 million.

Spurs eyes foreign clubs

BY CHRIS AYRES

TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR, the Premiership football club, confirmed yesterday that it had held acquisition talks with foreign clubs as part of its strategy to gain European-wide sponsorship, television and merchandising revenue.

Alan Sugar, the club's chairman, refused to name individual clubs, and said that a deal before Christmas was unlikely. He added that he was still interested in purchasing clubs in China,

where vast potential audiences are available. "If we did own four or five clubs," Mr Sugar said, "we could go on masse to a sponsor or a replica sportswear manufacturer and establish a central European mail order business to help distribution."

The plan was revealed as Tottenham reported an 80 per cent rise in pre-tax profits, from £4.2 million to £7.6 million, on turnover of £28 million, up 9 per cent from

£26 million. Earnings per share rose fivefold from 1.7p to 7.3p. A final dividend of 0.67p is due November 28, making a total of 1p (0.86p).

The strong results were in line with analysts' forecasts and came in spite of a relatively poor performance by the club on the field. Tottenham, which is managed by Gerry Francis, revealed that it had spent £19 million on players last year, including Les Ferdinand and David Ginola.

Racketeer effect hits Japanese brokers

FROM A CORRESPONDENT IN TOKYO

AFTER being hit by a widening racketeer payoff scandal, big Japanese brokerages yesterday reported a heavy fall in earnings for the first half of this year.

Nikko and Daiwa both suffered a sharp downturn in profits, while Yamaichi slumped into the red. Of Tokyo's big four brokers, only Nomura, the largest, managed to improve on the first half of last year, returning to profit from a loss.

Brokerages said the racketeering scandal that has involved Japan's big brokerages affected first-half earnings. Nikko said the impact would linger into the second half.

Nikko's profits fell to just ¥283 million (£1.44 million), down 98.7 per cent from ¥21.87 billion. Daiwa's profits fell 29 per cent to ¥15.53 billion, from ¥21.80 billion. Yamaichi's losses were ¥2.72 billion, including charges against restructuring European operations, compared with profits of ¥2.07 billion.

Nomura's net profits of ¥49.71 billion compared with a loss of ¥332.01 billion last time, when the brokerage provided huge financial assistance to a troubled affiliate.

Officials of Nomura, Yamaichi, Nikko and Dai-ichi Kangyo Bank, a commercial bank, have been arrested for allegedly paying off a corporate racketeer, or *sokaya*. *Sokaya* extort money from companies by threatening to disrupt shareholders' meetings.

Nomura said it has lost business with major clients since the scandal surfaced earlier this year. During summer, the Finance Ministry announced penalties for Nomura for its involvement in the scandal. The punishments included a ban on underwriting and participating in auctions of new government bonds between August 6 and December 31. As a result, Nomura said, it posted losses in August, although it returned to the black in September.

Company officials said weakness in Japanese shares had cut commissions on sales of Japanese equities overseas, also hitting profits.

Virgin Express offer price could top £24

VIRGIN EXPRESS Holdings yesterday confirmed plans to make an initial public offering of 2.14 million ordinary shares in the form of international depositary shares or American depositary shares to American and international investors. Merrill Lynch International, which is acting as global coordinator for the offering, said the offer price is expected to be between \$39 (£24) and \$45 a share.

Virgin has applied for listings on the Nasdaq national market and on the Brussels stock exchange. The offer is expected to start on November 13. Virgin Express is wholly owned by Virgin Travel and operates short to medium-haul jet services from Brussels, mainly within continental Europe. Between April 1996 and last August flights increased from 338 a month to 1,628. For the six months to June 30, revenue increased by 222 per cent to 2.04 billion Belgian francs (£34.2 million). Earnings before interest, tax, depreciation, amortisation and aircraft rental were up 39 per cent, to Bfr941 million.

Action Computer ahead

ACTION COMPUTER, the mail order supplier of information-technology products, lifted pre-tax profits by 58 per cent in the year to August 29 from £3.2 million to £5.1 million. Turnover was up 28 per cent from £134 million to £172 million, while earnings per share rose 15.5 per cent to 9.7p. A final dividend of 1.5p makes a total 2.5p. The company said that it expected growth in the UK mail order sector of the IT market to outpace that of the overall market.

Daks Simpson rises

DAKS SIMPSON, the UK clothing manufacturing and retail company that is owned by Sanyo Seiko, of Japan, made an interim pre-tax profit of £1.89 million, up from last year's £1.83 million. Its turnover increased by 12.5 per cent to £42.3 million. Earnings per share rose from 18.7p to 20.37p. Dividends paid on preference shares for the half year to July 31 amounted to £4.375, the same amount as was paid last year.

Anglogold advances

ANGLOGOLD, the gold division of South Africa's huge Anglo American mining company, lifted its net profits 11 per cent, to 236.3 million rand (about £30 million) in the three months to September 30. Operating profits were up by 17 per cent, to R490.5 million. The Freegold mine, the world's largest, reported a steady quarter, with ore production rising by 4 per cent, to 18.95 tons, while average working costs fell 3 per cent, to \$328 an ounce.

Lawson Beaumont sold

BREAK FOR THE BORDER has sold Lawson Beaumont, its specialist events, catering and Christmas party company, to Gardner Merchant services group for £2.5 million cash. An announcement on the rest of the group's disposal programme, involving the music-theatre division, is expected soon. The company also said Lawson Beaumont has made a payment to Break for the Border of around £300,000 in settlement of intra-group indebtedness.

Lyons ends franchise

LYONS IRISH Holdings said its Lyons Tea operation has decided not to renew its franchise arrangement with Dunkin' Donuts, a unit of Allied Domecq, and is to take a charge for the move, which "will not be significant". The lease to a number of outlets is being bought by Chaimaine Keenan, general manager of Dunkin' Donuts Ireland since 1992. The new company will not be trading as Dunkin' Donuts. Lyons said the value of the net assets disposed of is £992,000.

Vodafone calls Logica

LOGICA, the independent consultancy, system integration and software company, has won a £5 million contract from Vodafone to supply an archive system - or "calls pack" - to store information relating to calls made by Vodafone's three million network users. The system, expected by March 1998, will provide Vodafone with an automated network audit that can be used for reconciling billing queries, improving service and planning network expansion, Logica said.

LucasVarity share deal

LUCASVARITY, the Anglo-American engineering company, is negotiating the purchase of 66 per cent of the voting shares of Freios Varga, Brazil's largest brakes manufacturer. It was announced yesterday. The shares are held principally by Varga Participacoes. LucasVarity already has a 34 per cent interest in the business, which boasted sales of about £164 million last year.

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REF. 1002

US funds must declare policy on 2000 computer bug

Time bomb tactics demanded

FROM OLIVER AUGUST IN NEW YORK

REACTING to fears that US stock markets face a meltdown in the year 2000, the Securities and Exchange Commission is forcing financial service companies and mutual funds to make official disclosures on how they will combat the millennium computer bug time bomb.

The approval of mergers such as the \$9 billion acquisition of Solomon Brothers by the Travelers Group could be delayed if companies do not account for the costs and risks arising from the reprogramming of computer equipment. All annual reports filed by financial service com-

panies will be reviewed by the SEC to check the millennium exposure.

Brian Lane, an SEC finance expert, told a US Senate hearing that Wall Street is particularly vulnerable to the computer bug, which arises from the fact that most computers register only the last two digits of a year. The American investment community is highly dependent on electronic trading systems.

The SEC is insisting that companies state how they will tackle the issue, even if they believe that they will not be affected. Mr Lane said that banks and mutual funds should all go on the record to reassure investors.

Earlier this year Arthur Levitt, the SEC

chairman, said: "The Commission takes the year 2000 problem very seriously. We are engaged in a number of efforts to educate various participants in the securities markets regarding the need to respond successfully to the challenge and to monitor actively the progress of these entities."

He said that the SEC was working with various exchanges, the National Association of Securities Dealers and clearing agencies.

The New Stock Exchange has told its members they should have all their systems ready by December 1998 with the following 12 months earmarked for testing and corrections.

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Philips boosted by recovery in semiconductors

BY ADAM JONES

PHILIPS ELECTRONICS, of The Netherlands, has reported a sharp advance in its third-quarter profits on the back of a recovery in semiconductor sales.

In the three months to September 30, net profits from normal operations rose to 721 million guilders (about £218 million) from 123 million guilders in the third quarter of 1996.

These post-tax results were slightly higher than analysts' expectations of about 690 million guilders. Joost Van Beek, an analyst with the Dutch firm of Kempen & Co, said: "Third-quarter growth exceeded our expectations. You have to take into account that the year-ago period was rather weak."

Semiconductor sales started to accelerate in the second quarter and really took off in the third, Philips said. They pushed operating profits of the

semiconductor and components division up from 1.2 billion guilders in the first nine months of 1996, to 1.7 billion guilders in the equivalent period of 1997.

Total operating profits were 3.2 billion guilders for the first nine months of the year, compared with 1.5 billion guilders.

Philips, Europe's largest consumer electronics group, produces a range of products from television and stereo equipment to semiconductors. It is also the world's largest manufacturer of light bulbs.

The company is continuing a major restructuring, which has seen disposals and the removal of the loss-making German consumer electronics company Grundig from its consolidated accounts. Exceptional items, including proceeds of the sale of shares in Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing, added another 71 million guilders of profit to the net figure of 721

million guilders in the third quarter.

Jan Hommen, finance director, said yesterday that the group is transforming itself into a more transparent and accountable company. It has a long-term goal of double-digit profit growth and a 24 per cent net return on assets.

Mr Hommen said: "Our balance sheet debt at the end of the quarter is 33 per cent of our total capital structure. I would not mind to see the debt ... come down even more."

"One thing at the heart of this company is the ability to continue to make new products ... and for new products you need to continue research and continue to invest. That ability is critical if you want to have a future. You have a future if you have a strong balance sheet. Having a strong balance sheet is not a problem. I would say it's a must in this business."



Steve Thomas, left, and Michael Arnold plan to open five new Chicago Rock outlets in time for Christmas

Luminar extends nightclub chain

LUMINAR, the fast-growing restaurant and nightclub chain, is on target to open a further five Chicago Rock cafes ahead of the crucial Christmas trading period.

The company, under Michael Arnold, chairman, and Steve Thomas, chief executive,

said yesterday that despite a bullish property market it has identified new sites and an additional 16 outlets would be opened by the end of February 1999. So far this year Chicago Rock outlets have opened in Worcester, Chelmsford, Gloucester and Taunton. Expansion will be funded

from operating cash flow and a £17 million facility from the Bank of Scotland. The proceeds of a £15.6 million rights issue in May will be fully absorbed by the current year's development programme.

The company, whose controlling shareholder is Mercury Asset Management,

reported a 7 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £1.69 million for the half year to August 24 on turnover that increased 23 per cent to £14.7 million.

Earnings of 6.8p a share compared with a restated 7.2p last time. The interim dividend is unchanged at 2.33p a share.

Hutchison and P&G in new deal

BY A CORRESPONDENT

HUTCHISON WHAMPOA, the Far East trading group, has agreed to restructure its China joint venture with Procter & Gamble, with the aim of selling its entire stake to the US company within 20 years.

Under the agreement, P&G is able to increase its ownership in the joint venture from 69 per cent to 80 per cent by early 1998 through the exercise of initial options and immediately assume total management control. P&G will pay \$650 million (£396 million) for the initial options, with Hutchison taking exceptional profits of \$186 million in 1997 and \$434 million in 1998.

P&G's stake can be increased to 100 per cent by 2017 through the exercise of options over the next 20 years, the company said. The payment for these options will be based on an agreed formula using the current market value of the business at that time.

Hutchison Whampoa will receive a consideration which fully reflects the value of the interest to be disposed of in businesses in mainland China," said Canning Fok, managing director.

Newsagents at risk, says Verdict

BY SARAH CUNNINGHAM

UP TO 10,000 newsagents risk going out of business because of the growing importance of supermarkets in their key areas of newspapers and magazines, tobacco and sweets.

Verdict, the retail consultancy, says that the sector is in crisis, with 1,100 newsagents going under last year in the wake of the 1994 Monopolies and Mergers Commission ruling allowing wider distribution of newspapers. More than 10,000 additional shops now sell papers, putting traditional newsagents under intense pressure. More consolidation is forecast for the sector, with small regional groups falling prey to the national multiples.

The sector was worth £9.6 billion last year, only 1.6 per cent more than the previous year, Verdict says, which meant that, in real terms, it declined by 3.9 per cent.

Supermarkets now account for 17 per cent of news and magazine spending, 38 per cent of tobacco spending and 48 per cent of confectionery spending.

Verdict suggests that newsagent chains will have to embrace convenience store retailing if they are to prosper.

It believes that WH Smith, Britain's biggest newsagent, is mistaken in its plan to demerge its Waterstone's bookshops and sell its Virgin/Cur Price record shops, noting the loss of group buying power.

Stakis acts to improve bank debt

BY DOMINIC WALSH

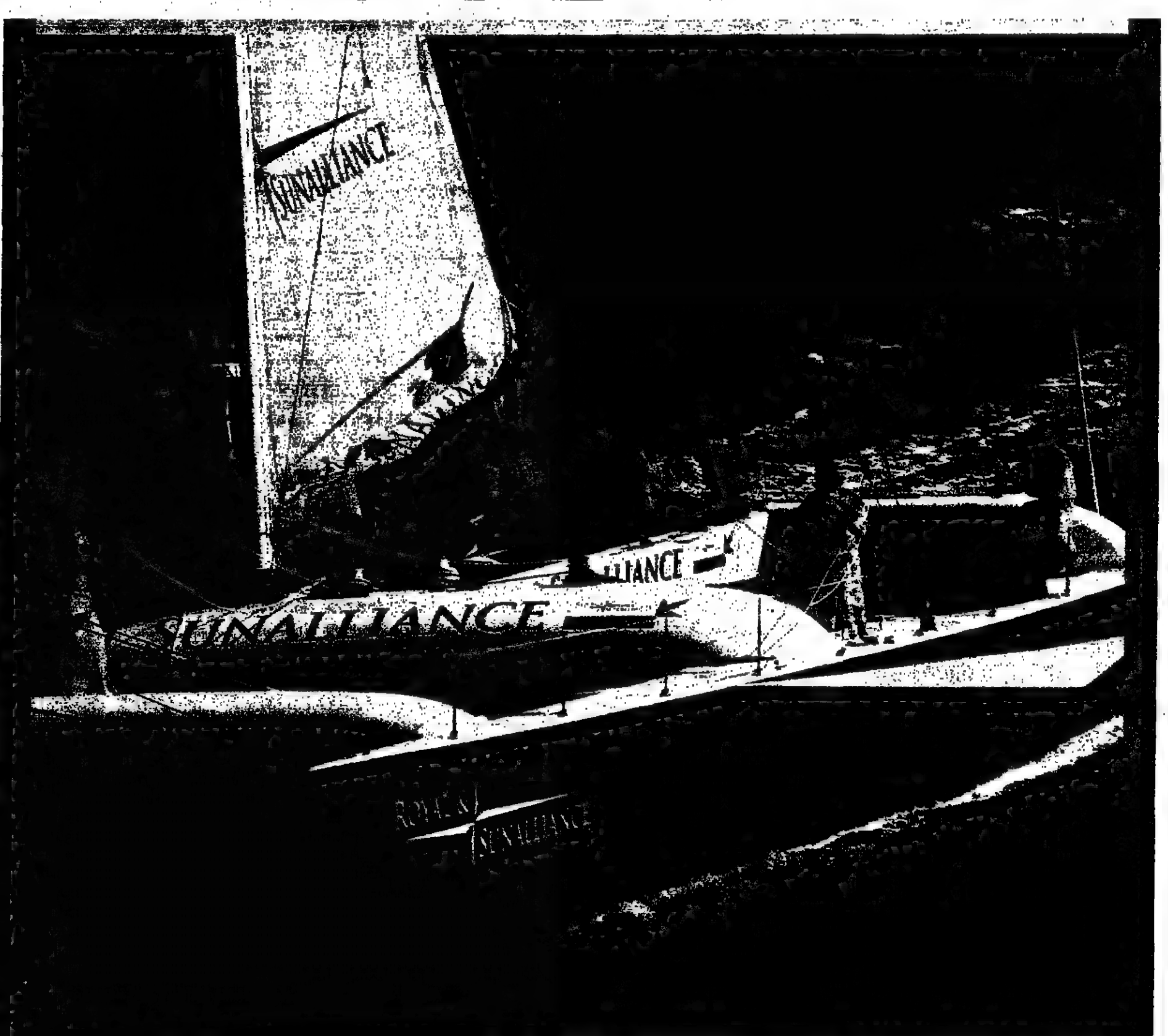
STAKIS, the hotel and casino operator, has refinanced a third of its bank debt in a bid to strengthen its balance sheet and put it in a stronger position to pursue acquisition opportunities.

The company, which a year ago bought Metropole Hotels for £27 million, announced yesterday that it had completed an £82.5 million long-term, fixed-rate financing agreement through two private placements — the first time that it has entered the private placement market.

The funds were raised in two lots: a \$100 million ten-year placement with five US institutional investors and a £20 million, 13-year placement with a UK investor. The dollar tranche was immediately swapped into sterling leaving Stakis with no exposure to sterling/dollar exchange rates.

The proceeds, carrying a 7.66 per cent sterling rate, will be used to repay banks' debts, which stand at £291 million.

David Black, group treasurer, said the company already had "sufficient headroom for expansion from existing bank facilities", but he admitted that the refinancing would "free up some appetite from the banks" if it wanted to make an acquisition. He added that acquisitions were unlikely in the short-term.



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TRACY EDWARDS and her crew are in a race against time. On Monday, having already smashed the cross Channel record, they launched their bid to beat the Round Britain and Ireland record of 5 days 21 hours in the racing catamaran, *Royal & SunAlliance*. If they succeed, Tracy and her ten female crew members will no doubt show characteristic modesty. But the truth is, record or no record, they will have sailed 1,787 nautical miles through some of the toughest stretches of water in the world. To do that takes outstanding personal qualities. The ability to assess risk in a split second and handle it coolly. To foster absolute trust in your partners and pull together as a team. Such qualities are not commonplace. We should know. We ask for the same sort of dedication and professionalism from our team at Royal & SunAlliance. And we get it. That's why we're behind this challenge. And that's why we're on her side.

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THE TIMES/DILLONS FORUM

A satirical walk with BILL BRYSON



READERS are invited to a forum with the bestselling author Bill Bryson, when he will read extracts from his gripping new book: *A Walk in the Woods*, giving accounts of his experiences along the longest footpath in the world, the Appalachian Trail.

The trail promised Bryson endless days of walking, nights of eating strange foods and, most importantly, the chance to

turn his inquiring, satirical eye once again on his native America.

The forum on Tuesday, November 4, will be held at the Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1. Tickets at £10 (concessions £7.50) include £2 off the price of *A Walk in the Woods* (Doubleday, £16.99).

There will also be an opportunity for the audience to ask questions.

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Equities sharply lower

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1987 Low Company Price '86 % '85				1987 Low Company Price '86 % '85			
ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES				ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES			
200	497	100	100	225	110	100	100
201	497	100	100	226	110	100	100
202	497	100	100	227	110	100	100
203	497	100	100	228	110	100	100
204	497	100	100	229	110	100	100
205	497	100	100	230	110	100	100
206	497	100	100	231	110	100	100
207	497	100	100	232	110	100	100
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226	497	100	100	251	110	100	100
227	497	100	100	252	110	100	100
228	497	100	100	253	110	100	100
229	497	100	100	254	110	100	100
230	497	100	100	255	110	100	100
231	497	100	100	256	110	100	100
232	497	100	100	257	110	100	100
233	497	100	100	258	110	100	100
234	497	100	100	259	110	100	100
235	497	100	100	260	110	100	100
236	497	100	100	261	110	100	100
237	497	100	100	262	110	100	100
238	497	100	100	263	110	100	100
239	497	100	100	264	110	100	100
240	497	100	100	265	110	100	100
241	497	100	100	266	110	100	100
242	497	100	100	267	110	100	100
243	497	100	100	268	110	100	100
244	497	100	100	269	110	100	100
245	497	100	100	270	110	100	100
246	497	100	100	271	110	100	100
247	497	100	100	272	110	100	100
248	497	100	100	273	110	100	100
249	497	100	100	274	110	100	100
250	497	100	100	275	110	100	100
251	497	100	100	276	110	100	100
252	497	100	100	277	110	100	100
253	497	100	100	278	110	100	100
254	497	100	100	279	110	100	100
BANKS				BANKS			
1524	710	100	100	1154	88	100	100
1525	710	100	100	1155	88	100	100
1526	710	100	100	1156	88	100	100
1527	710	100	100	1157	88	100	100
1528	710	100	100	1158	88	100	100
1529	710	100	100	1159	88	100	100
1530	710	100	100	1160	88	100	100
1531	710	100	100	1161	88	100	100
1532	710	100	100	1162	88	100	100
1533	710	100	100	1163	88	100	100
1534	710	100	100	1164	88	100	100
1535	710	100	100	1165	88	100	100
1536	710	100	100	1166	88	100	100
1537	710	100	100	1167	88	100	100
1538	710	100	100	1168	88	100	100
1539	710	100	100	1169	88	100	100
1540	710	100	100	1170	88	100	100
1541	710	100	100	1171	88	100	100
1542	710	100	100	1172	88	100	100
1543	710	100	100	1173	88	100	100
1544	710	100	100	1174	88	100	100
1545	710	100	100	1175	88	100	100
1546	710	100	100	1176	88	100	100
1547	710	100	100	1177	88	100	100
1548	710	100	100	1178	88	100	100
1549	710	100	100	1179	88	100	100
1550	710	100	100	1180	88	100	100
1551	710	100	100	1181	88	100	100
1552	710	100	100	1182	88	100	100
1553	710	100	100	1183	88	100	100
1554	710	100	100	1184	88	100	100
1555	710	100	100	1185	88	100	100
1556	710	100	100	1186	88	100	100
1557	710	100	100	1187	88	100	100
1558	710	100	100	1188	88	100	100
1559	710	100	100	1189	88	100	100
1560	710	100	100	1190	88	100	100
1561	710	100	100	1191	88	100	100
1562	710	100	100	1192	88	100	100
1563	710	100	100	1193	88	100	100
1564	710	100	100	1194	88	100	100
1565	710	100	100	1195	88	100	100
1566	710	100	100	1196	88	100	100
1567	710	100	100	1197	88	100	100
1568	710	100	100	1198	88	100	100
1569	710	100	100	1199	88	100	100
1570	710	100	100	1200	88	100	100
1571	710	100	100	1201	88	100	100
1572	710	100	100	1202	88	100	100
1573	710	100	100	1203	88	100	100
1574	710	100	100	1204	88	100	100
1575	710	100	100	1205	88	100	100
1576	710	100	100	1206	88	100	100
1577	710	100	100	1207	88	100	100
1578	710	100	100	1208	88	100	100
1579	710	100	100	1209	88	100	100
1580	710	100	100	1210	88	100	100
1581	710	100	100	1211	88	100	100
1582	710	100	100	1212	88	100	100
1583	710	100	100	1213	88	100	100
1584	710	100	100	1214	88	100	100
1585	710	100	100	1215	88	100	100
1586	710	100	100	1216	88	100	100
1587	710	100	100	1217	88	100	100
1588	710	100	100	1218	88	100	100
1589	710	100	100	1219	88	100	100
1590	710	100	100	1220	88	100	100
1591	710	100	100	1221	88	100	100
1592	710	100	100	1222	88	100	100
1593	710	100	100	1223	88	100	100
1594	710	100	100	1224	88	100	100
1595	710	100	100	1225	88	100	100
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1599	710	100	100	1229	88	100	100
1600	710	100	100	1230	88	100	100
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1602	710	100	100	1232	88	100	100
1603	710	100	100	1233	88	100	100
1604	710	100	100	1234	88	100	100
1605	710	100	100	1235	88	100	100
1606	710	100	100	1236	88	100	100
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1608	710	100	100	1238	88	100	100
1609	710	100	100	1239	88	100	100
1610	710	100	100	1240	88	100	100
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1612	710	100	100	1242	88	100	100
1613	710	100	100	1243	88	100	100
1614	710	100	100	1244	88	100	100
1615	710	100	100	1245	88	100	100
1616	710	100	100	1246	88	100	100
1617	710	100	100	1247	88	100	100
1618	710	100	100	1248	88	100	100
1619	710	100	100	1249	88	100	100
1620	710	100	100	1250	88	100	100
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1623	710	100	100	1253	88	100	100
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1625	710	100	100	1255	88	100	100
1626	710	100	100	1256	88	100	100
1627	710	100	100	1257	88	100	100
1628	710	100	100	1258	88	100	100
1629	710	100	100	1259	88	100	100
1630	710	100	100	1260	88	100	100
1631	710	100	100	1261	88	100	100
1632	710	100	100	1262	88	100	100
1633	710	100	100	1263	88	100	100
1634	710	100	100	1264	88	100	100
1635	710	100	100	1265	88	100	100
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1637	710	100	100	1267	88	100	100
1638	710	100	100	1268	88	100	100
1639	710	100	100	1269	88	100	100
1640	710	100	100	1270	88	100	100
1641	710	100	100	1271	88	100	100
1642	710	100	100	1272	88	100	100
1643	710	100	100	1273	88	100	100
1644	710	100	100	1274	88	100	100
1645	710	100	100	1275	88	100	100
1646	710	100	100	1276	88	1	

1989 Low Company					1989 High Low Company					1989 Low Company					1989 High Low Company					
Price	4+	%	%	RE	Price	4+	%	%	RE	Price	4+	%	%	RE	Price	4+	%	%	RE	
307 Shale	228	-	12	24	245	307 Shale	228	-	12	245	307 Shale	228	-	12	245	307 Shale	228	-	12	245
308 Shale	228	-	12	24	245	308 Shale	228	-	12	245	308 Shale	228	-	12	245	308 Shale	228	-	12	245
309 Shale	228	-	12	24	245	309 Shale	228	-	12	245	309 Shale	228	-	12	245	309 Shale	228	-	12	245
310 Shale	228	-	12	24	245	310 Shale	228	-	12	245	310 Shale	228	-	12	245	310 Shale	228	-	12	245
311 Shale	228	-	12	24	245	311 Shale	228	-	12	245	311 Shale	228	-	12	245	311 Shale	228	-	12	245
312 Shale	228	-	12	24	245	312 Shale	228	-	12	245	312 Shale	228	-	12	245	312 Shale	228	-	12	245
313 Shale	228	-	12	24	245	313 Shale	228	-	12	245	313 Shale	228	-	12	245	313 Shale	228	-	12	245
314 Shale	228	-	12	24	245	314 Shale	228	-	12	245	314 Shale	228	-	12	245	314 Shale	228	-	12	245
315 Shale	228	-	12	24	245	315 Shale	228	-	12	245	315 Shale	228	-	12	245	315 Shale	228	-	12	245
316 Shale	228	-	12	24	245	316 Shale	228	-	12	245	316 Shale	228	-	12	245	316 Shale	228	-	12	245
317 Shale	228	-	12	24	245	317 Shale	228	-	12	245	317 Shale	228	-	12	245	317 Shale	228	-	12	245
318 Shale	228	-	12	24	245	318 Shale	228	-	12	245	318 Shale	228	-	12	245	318 Shale	228	-	12	245
319 Shale	228	-	12	24	245	319 Shale	228	-	12	245	319 Shale	228	-	12	245	319 Shale	228	-	12	245
320 Shale	228	-	12	24	245	320 Shale	228	-	12	245	320 Shale	228	-	12	245	320 Shale	228	-	12	245
321 Shale	228	-	12	24	245	321 Shale	228	-	12	245	321 Shale	228	-	12	245	321 Shale	228	-	12	245
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328 Shale	228	-	12	24	245	328 Shale	228	-	12	245	328 Shale	228	-	12	245	328 Shale	228	-	12	245
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352 Shale	228	-	12	24	245	352 Shale	228	-	12	245	352 Shale	228	-	12	245	352 Shale	228	-	12	245
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357 Shale	228	-	12	24	245	357 Shale	228	-	12	245	357 Shale	228	-	12	245	357 Shale	228	-	12	245
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364 Shale	228	-	12	24	245	364 Shale	228	-	12	245	364 Shale	228	-	12	245	364 Shale	228	-	12	245
365 Shale	228	-	12	24	245	365 Shale	228	-	12	245	365 Shale	228	-	12	245	365 Shale	228	-	12	245
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367 Shale	228	-	12	24	245	367 Shale	228	-	12	245	367 Shale	228	-	12	245	367 Shale	228	-	12	245
368 Shale	228	-	12	24	245	368 Shale	228	-	12	245	368 Shale	228	-	12	245	368 Shale	228	-	12	245
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372 Shale	228	-	12	24	245	372 Shale	228	-	12	245	372 Shale	228	-	12	245	372 Shale	228	-	12	245
373 Shale	228	-	12	24	245	373 Shale	228	-	12	245	373 Shale	228	-	12	245	373 Shale	228	-	12	245
374 Shale	228	-	12	24	245	374 Shale	228	-	12	245	374 Shale	228	-	12	245	374 Shale	228	-	12	245
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377 Shale	228	-	12	24	245	377 Shale	228	-	12	245	377 Shale	228	-	12	245	377 Shale	228	-	12	245
378 Shale	228	-	12	24	245	378 Shale	228	-	12	245	378 Shale	228	-	12	245	378 Shale	228	-	12	245
379 Shale	228	-	12	24	245	379 Shale	228	-	12	245	379 Shale	228	-	12	245	379 Shale	22			

[illegible]

LE TEMPS

CHANEL

THE PREMIERE COLLECTION 18 CARAT GOLD WATCH AND CHAIN BRACELET
SET WITH DIAMONDS MADE IN SWITZERLAND

CHANEL, FINE JEWELLERY BOUTIQUE 179 NEW BOND STREET LONDON W1 TEL 0171 499 0000

THE TIMES									
Portfolio									
£2,000 to be won									
<p>Check the numbers on your Portfolio card and find your eight stocks in the Portfolio panel below. In the column provided next to your eight shares enter the share movements, as published on this page. Ignore fractions, i.e. enter 16½ as 16 (the symbol, ½, means no change). After listing the price changes of your eight shares enter the share movements as appropriate to find your total which can be plus or minus. If your overall total matches exactly the points required for the daily dividend you win or share the £2,000 daily prize.</p>									
No	Company	Group	Gain/loss	pts					
1	Sinclair (Vire)	Life							
2	Cy Cnr Rst	Breweries							
3	Quicks Group	Distri's							
4	Hibernian IE	Insurance							
5	Biscuit	Insurance							
6	Oxford Inst	Electronic							
7	First Tech	Eng. Veh							
8	Food Man	Food Man							
9	Wedding	Food							
10	Hanson	Bl'd Man							
11	Bolls-Roy	Eng'ng/Imp							
12	Halma	Eng'ng/Imp							
13	Bryant	Bl'd & Cons							
14	Swallowfield	House Dis							
15	News Corp	Media							
16	Cent Feltc	Mining							
17	Buro Coal	Chemicals							
18	Bost (Henry)	Bl'd & Cons							
19	Alld (David)	Chemicals							
20	SDX Bus Sys	Electronic							
21	Plant & Gen	Road Man							
22	BSM	Sup Serv							
23	Kloof	Mining							
24	Loverack	Print Pap							
25	De La Rue	Print Pap							
26	JIJ Group	Food Man							
27	Body Shop	Ret Gen							
28	Acson Hldgs	Div Inds							
29	Sevens Trent	Water							
30	CPL Aromas	Food Man							
31	Gwalla Cons	Mining							
32	Thames	Water							
33	FBO IE	Food							
34	Sainsbury J	Ret Food							
35	Montague	Mining							
36	PEAKM	Print Pap							
37	Dann	Ret Gen							
38	Telemetric	Electronic							
39	Walcotsp Corp	Property							
40	Tarmac	Bl'd Mats							
41	KMC GP	Bl'd Mats							
42	Admiral	Electronic							
43	Johns Shorpu	Eng'ng/Imp							
44	TV Cp	Media							
BTM Newsprinters Ltd			Total						

Portfolio									
in Times Newspapers Limited									
DAILY DIVIDEND									
+18									
Claims required for +18 pts									
Claims to be made									
between 9.30am-3pm									
Weekly Dividend									
<p>Please make a note of your daily totals to enable the weekly dividend published in the Savings Times to write 11,000.</p>									
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun			
Weekly accumulation									
<p>Four winners shared the prize yesterday, each receiving £200. They were: Mrs J. Smith, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 18</p>									

No	Company	Group	Gains or Loss
1	Sincilar (Wm)	Leisure	
2	Cy Cntr Rst	Breweries	
3	Quicks Group	Danl'n's	
4	Hibernian IE	Insurance	
5	Hiscox	Insurance	
6	Culford Inst	Electronic	
7	Elec Tech	Engn'g	
8	Trent	Food Man	
9	Weddington	Printng Pap	
10	Hanson	Bl'd Mats	
11	Rolls-Royce	Engn'g	
12	Halma	Engn'g	
13	Bryant	Bl'd & Cons	
14	Swallowfield	House Gds	
15	Newscorp	Media	
16	Imperial	Med'ng	
17	Euro Colour	Chemicals	
18	Boat (Henry)	Bl'd & Cons	
19	Alid Dmco	Air Bus	
20	SDX Bus Sys	Electronic	
21	Plant & Gen	Food Man	
22	B&M	Sup Serv	
23	Kloof	Printng	
24	Loversack	Mining Pap	
25	De La Rue	Printng Pap	
26	Trimup	Food Man	
27	Body Shop	Ret Gen	
28	Ascut Hldgs	Dly Inds	
29	Severn Trent	Water	
30	CPL Aromas	Food Man	
31	Gvaltin Cons	Mining	
32	Thames	Water	
33	FBD IE	Insurance	
34	Sainsbury's	Ret Food	
35	Montesque	Mining	
36	REXAM	Printng Pap	
37	Exam	Ret Gen	
38	Timbrex	Electronic	
39	Walslop Grp	Electric	
40	Tarmac	Bl'd Mats	
41	RMC GP	Bl'd Mats	
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One classic way of dealing with any British problem, or at least diverting attention from it, is to assert that matters are much worse in America. Believe me, that isn't my intention in retailing the following cautionary cultural tale from across the Atlantic. Quite the opposite. You would have to be peculiarly myopic, stupid or perverse — or perhaps just a member of the Arts Council — not to detect British parallels at every turn in this story. But more of that later.

Ten days ago the most tremendous storm broke in the American arts world. A vast, painstakingly researched report was published — 193 pages in all — that accuses America's prime cultural institutions of being elitist, effectively racist and largely isolated from the communities they purport to serve. They have become the preserve of a wealthy few intent on preserving their little empires, they haven't noticed that they are irrelevant to tens of millions of people. It's "a recipe for disaster," the report asserts.

Well, there's nothing new about

'We're elitist, racist and irrelevant'

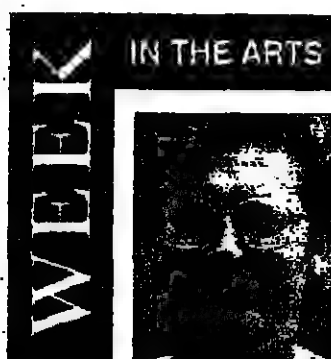
this sort of sniping, of course. Such proud-to-be-philistine politicians as Jesse Helms and Newt Gingrich have been doing it for years. Unfortunately, the report doesn't come from them. It comes from the National Endowment for the Arts, roughly the American equivalent of our Arts Council. In other words, these stinging accusations emanate from the very organisation set up to promote "serious culture in America."

No wonder the report — *American Canvases, an Arts Legacy for our Communities* — sent gloom and doom through the arts world. Particularly since it also noted that private gifts to the arts (a crucial plank of American arts funding) are declining disastrously: the annual total has fallen by £150 million in just three years. "Study Links Drop in Support to Elitist Attitude in the Arts," proclaimed the front page of *The New York Times* last week. Not the punchiest

headline ever written, but it made the fatal connection that has caused such dismay.

Can you imagine our own cosy little Arts Council coming up with something as tough, brave and cogent as the NEA's extraordinary study in self-excoriation? No, me neither. "Sad to say," the report notes, "many American citizens fail to recognise the direct relevance of art to their lives." It blames many things: the lack of arts in schools; the hostile political climate (the NEA itself only escaped abolition by a whisker last month); and the enervating consumerist ethos that art is "something you watch other people do, rather than do yourself."

But chiefly the NEA claims that the arts world has brought much of its "marginalisation" on itself. "The arts community," the report says, "has neglected those aspects of participation, democratisation and popularisation that might



RICHARD MORRISON

have helped to sustain the arts when the political climate turned sour." In the past 30 years the arts sector in America has certainly expanded spectacularly: there are now 120 professional opera companies where there were 27 in 1964, 400 dance companies instead of 37,

425 theatre companies instead of 56. But audience growth has failed to keep up. It is now apparent, the report says, "that merely maintaining the status quo is neither desirable nor even possible". And in a mammoth coda to this *symphonie pathétique* it suggests about a million ways in which the arts must change to survive.

It would be fun, but rather space-consuming, to report in detail the squealing chorus of outrage, feigned incredulity and panic that this report has provoked among great American arts institutions in the past week. Some denounced it as treachery, a "Trojan Horse" of a document, purporting to help the arts but actually hastening their demise by playing into the hands of the Jesse Helms brigade. Others blamed the arts' lack of popular appeal on that convenient contemporary phenomenon, "dumbing down". Others claimed to have excellent

"outreach" schemes already in place, and therefore argued that accusations of "elitism" were out of date. And so on. Almost nobody of any standing seemed to accept that there might be some truth in the NEA's analysis.

That is America's problem. Our problem is that you can devour huge chunks of *Canvases* and quite easily believe that you are reading *Canvases* UK. Of course our arts scenes are not exactly comparable. America's institutions are much more vulnerable to charges of elitism because they are so dependent on wealthy patrons (though Covent Garden is fast going that way). Our state schools have not yet entirely erased the arts from the curriculum. And although the social fabric of Britain is far more diverse than it was 30 years ago, it has nothing like the anguished polarities of the average American

city. British arts organisations still have a chance of breaking through cultural barriers that, I fear, are impenetrable in America.

Even so, the NEA's report should be a wake-up call for us as well as them. Engraved on the Kennedy Centre in Washington DC is a fine quotation from JFK himself: "This country cannot afford to be materially rich and spiritually poor." The NEA has been bold enough to tell those running the arts in America that by perpetuating an aloof, clubby, unwelcoming image they are contributing to spiritual poverty, not helping to eradicate it.

New some British arts luminaries should pluck up the courage to make the same point here. Unfortunately, when it comes to telling their chums unpalatable truths, our leading luvvies — normally so full of windy rhetoric — fall strangely silent. Never mind. If you know how to work the Internet (or can bribe some bright nine-year-old to do it for you) *Canvases* America can be found in full on <http://arts.endow.gov>. It is gripping stuff. Read it and weep.

Finland's finest bows into London

FINNISH nationality is not in itself a passport to success in the international Jean Sibelius Violin Competition, held in Helsinki. Pekka Kuusisto, who was only 18 at the time (1995), was in fact the first Finn to win the prestigious competition, and he went on to make a highly acclaimed recording of the Sibelius Violin Concerto.

His Wignmore Hall date on Tuesday night marked his London recital debut, and with it he confirmed his rapidly growing reputation as one of the outstanding young artists of his time.

Beginning with Bach's Partita in E Major BWV1006 for solo violin, he displayed both stylistic insight and technical accomplishment of the highest order. By subtle use of dynamic shading and varied articulation he was able to suggest the implied counterpoint in the long single melodic lines, and the sharp, snappy rhythms of the *Gavotte en Rondeau* put a spring in the step of this celebrated dance movement.

Schubert's Sonata No. 1, in which Kuusisto was accompanied confidently by his compatriot, Raimo Karppe, moves

from a spare 12-note theme, through a passionate Largo introducing the B-A-C-H motif, to a characteristically ironic finale. Kuusisto had the measure of it all, and showed equal assurance in Ravel's Sonata for violin and piano, with its bluesy central movement — the jazz glissandi given full rein — and wildly virtuosic perpetual mobile finale.

In Prokofiev's *Cinq Mélodies* Op 35b, Kuusisto, again accompanied in exemplary fashion by Karppe, was able to draw on the whole range of tonal colours, from the velvety muted opening through the pizzicato *Lento* to the more forceful finale. Yet each movement, too, had the essentially lyrical impulse that underpins these pieces, originally conceived as a set of songs without words.

BARRY MILLINGTON

Perm any possible solution



Hair-brained plot: the suspects include Jim Sweeney (Customer No 1) and Nicola Stapleton (sexy assistant Barbara)

Under its American title, *Shear Madness*, this interactive murder-comedy has become the longest-running non-musical play that side of the Atlantic. It enjoyed a previous life as *Schereenschnitt*, written by a German psychologist to demonstrate how people can misperceive reality.

The first 30 minutes is pretty dreadful stuff. A gay hairdresser, his sexy girl-assistant, a couple of male customers and a battleaxe all say and do their expected things in a style that vanished from the West End with the death of camp revue. Upstairs a pianist endlessly plays Rachmaninov, and everyone goes in and out of the various doors to provide them with the opportunity to be the pianist's murderer. The direction (by Neil Mullarkey) is basically competent.

Then something unprecedented happens. The pianist is dead, the police arrive and Lee Simpson's Inspector comes down to the front of the stage and asks us to help to reconstruct the opening 30 minutes. The salon's staff and customers throw up their hands at the sight of us, and the interesting part of the evening begins.

The audience asks questions — who was the battleaxe really phoning? How did Customer No 1 get blood on his fingers?

— and the actors have to come up with persuasive explanations. The adapters of the play (Mullarkey, Simpson and Jim Sweeney) must have prepared answers to scores of possible inquiries, because documentary support for the explanations is brought out from pockets and cupboards and briefcase. One member of the audience is invited on to the stage to ring the battleaxe's home number and is drawn into a conversation with a cleaning-lady.

Sweeney, playing Customer No 1, develops an enjoyable line of weary sarcasm when yet another one of us queries his behaviour. Personal remarks are flying in all directions; audience comments draw laughter from audience and stage alike. The cast keep in character and with four obvious suspects, including Paul Clayton's queen, Bridget Armstrong's Knightsbridge matron and Nicola Stapleton's sexy assistant, there is a choice of murderer to vote for. Jolly fun, and as for the capacity to misperceive reality, mine was colossal.

JEREMY KINGSTON

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If this is the Scream I'm Edvard Munch

PRIMAL SCREAM

Echo Dek
(Creation CRECD 224 £15.99)
HALFWAY between a vanity project and a cash-cow, the remix album occupies an uncomfortable position in the scheme of things. Ostensibly aimed at the dance market, its appeal naturally incorporates a certain curiosity value for fans of a particular act or album.

Echo Dek is a new version of Primal Scream's award-winning album, *Vanishing Point*, remixed, reassembled and retitled by Adrian Sherwood at his On-U Sound Studios in East London. In Sherwood's hands the songs are "reconstructed as huge, towering, millennial-dub symphonies", according to the group's spin-doctors. Or, to put it another way, stripped of nearly all words and melodies, then bounced through echo chambers and reverb units until they are reduced to a virtually unrecognisable soup of floating rhythmic grooves and spooky sound-effects.

There are some great bits and pieces. *Duffd Up* retains the cool, jazzy vibe of *Get Duffd*, only now the horns dance around the melody like flames in a fire, while *JU-87*, one of two new arrangements of *Stuka*, builds some wonderful trip-hop dynamics behind various bleeping effects, including what sounds like an Avon Lady doorbell.

CDs reviewed in *The Times* can be ordered from the Times Music Shop on 0345 023498

POP ALBUMS

But, while the strange, tangential snippets of musical conversation must have seemed marvellously clever and fun to the participants, you cannot help noticing how self-absorbed and ultimately rather boring it all eventually becomes.

OZRIC TENTACLES

Curious Corn
(Snapper Music SMACD 502 £11.99)

FROM a high point four years ago, when their album *Jurassic Shift* almost reached the Top Ten, Ozric Tentacles have rather slipped from view. But for a group which has stuck so resolutely to resurrecting the sound of progressive-rock pioneers such as Steve Hillage and Gong, outsider/cult status is surely the best they can ever have hoped to achieve.

As befits an act that was first convened around a campfire at the Stonehenge Solstice Festival in 1982, the sleeve of their latest album, *Curious Corn*, comes decorated with pictures of a pyramid and flying saucers zapping the cornfields below.

But if Ozric Tentacles present an easy target for hip, metropolitan reviewers, as musicians they are nobody's fools, and the seven instrumental tracks reflect a level of artistry and expertise more commonly found in jazz. Many of the numbers, such as the aptly-named *Afroclonk* and the sinuous title track, are built around choppy rhythms set in awkward time signatures and embellished with exotic touches of instrumentation that sound vaguely Middle Eastern in origin. While the themes are carefully structured, the improvisations are negotiated with verve and passion, making this an album of skill and incongruous charm.

THE JOSEPHINE WIGGS EXPERIENCE

Bon Bon Lifestyle
(Grand Royal GRO35 £14.49)

GIVEN a line-up dominated by Josephine Wiggs (bass player in the Breeders) and Jon Mattock (former drummer with Spacemen 3 and Spiritualized), with contributions from guitarist Audu Obaje, you might expect the Experience to be a groove-heavy case of the rhythm

section's revenge. But, as well as singing in a voice as clear and composed as cut glass, Wiggs plays guitar, drums, keyboards and even a bit of cello on a haunting version of the old Beach Boys song *Till I Die*.

All in all, *Bon Bon Lifestyle* is a delicately crafted diversion that adds a cool tang of folk and jazz-noir to an alternative-pop base.

GARY NUMAN

Exile
(Eagle EAG 008 £13.99)

WHILE it will take more to rehabilitate Gary Numan than the recent multi-artist tribute album, *Random*, and a few supportive quotes from latterday electronica stars such as Liam Howlett and Trent Reznor, there is no doubt that the android man's stock is more buoyant than it has been at any time since the late 1980s.

Even so, his new album, *Exile*, rarely rises above the mundane, with songs such as *Prophecy* and *The Angel Wars* failing to transcend the emotionally flat, disengaged tone of his delivery. The religious theme running through numbers such as *Dead Heaven*, *Absolution*, and *Innocence Bleeding* is handled with the same air of blank detachment, and lines such as "I don't believe in the virgin birth/I don't believe in the cross on the hill" are dispatched with all the passion of someone checking off a shopping list.

The cruellest irony is that Numan now sounds as if he is travelling in the wake of those acts he once influenced, most obviously Tears For Fears and Depeche Mode. He was an original talent, but you wouldn't know it to listen to this.

DAVID SINCLAIR



Take Primal Scream's album, *Vanishing Point*, remix it and change the song titles, and what have you got? A bore

TOP TEN ALBUMS

- | | | | | |
|----|------|-----------------------|-------|-------------------------------|
| 1 | (1) | Urban Hymns | | Verve (Hut) |
| 2 | (3) | Fresco | | M People (M People) |
| 3 | (2) | Postcards from Heaven | | Lighthouse Family (Wild Card) |
| 4 | (4) | Be Here Now | | Oasis (Creation) |
| 5 | (5) | Greatest Hits | | Eternal (EMI) |
| 6 | (6) | White on Blonde | | Texas (Mercury) |
| 7 | (7) | The Big Picture | | Elton John (Rocket) |
| 8 | (8) | Very Best of | | Jam (Polydor/Polygram TV) |
| 9 | (9) | Portishead | | Portishead (Gol Beat) |
| 10 | (10) | The Nail File | | Jimmy Nail (East West) |

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Figure of brackets denotes last week's position

THE CORRS

THE CORRS THE CORRS THE CORRS

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I saw a bad moon rising. Singers started being in films again, and so the stock market crashed

Pop up and down the City road

It's not that difficult to be psychic. In fact, I did it on Tuesday. Of course, I had to do something showy to prove my mystical powers and impress my friends — like slit open the belly of the drummer from a third division Britpop band and poke around in his steaming entrails with a spooky stick, while staring up at a waxing moon with crossed eyes — before I muttered: "There will be a stock market crash before the end of the week."

Of course, those of you who read the financial pages of the newspapers will be saying: "Pooh! I know that! In fact, everyone knows that by now." (As for those who are saying "What are the financial pages of the newspapers?", they're the ones that have charts with ICI and Railtrack at No.1, rather than the Spice Girls. Although, what with all those crisps/pop/deodorant Spice wedge-creation schemes, who knows what 1998 will see?)

Anyway, the predictions on the financial pages come from adding up numbers, drawing graphs and making gaudily coloured pie-charts based on the number of bridges sold in Telford in August — in other words, the kind of thing we did in school at the age of 11, and found we all had different answers.

But surely we've all grown older and wiser than those days, when painting your hands with glue and rubbing them together to make grimy rubber glue-balls thrilled us more than the idea of having sex or smoking fags?

No. Which is precisely why my Stock Market Crash Prediction Method is far more reliable — indeed, infallible — and adult. And it is simply this: lots of pop stars are currently appearing in films. Damon Albarn made a fairly creditable effort as a wideboy who looked adorably grumpy and swore a bit in *Face/Mark*. E. Smith from the Fall has made his acting debut as a social worker in a BBC adaptation of Dostoevsky's *Notes from the Underground*; and Shaun Ryder from Black Grape has flexed his "Reaction shot, darling" muscles in the film of *The Avengers*, which is out next year. Can you guess what kind of role Ryder might have been cast in? Yes, that's right — he's a gangster. One boggles at how easy it must actually be to be a casting director.

Of course, that's just the pop thespians for this year. Over the past three years, we have had Courtney Love in *The People vs Larry Flynt*; J. Mascis from Dinosaur Jr in *Gas, Food and Lodging*; Marilyn Manson in *Lost Highway*; and Eddie Vedder from Pearl Jam doing something in a generic slacker movie that I've thankfully managed to go all "the name's on the tip of my tongue" on.

The last time a slew of pop stars went all Hollywood on us was in the mid to late 1980s, when Grace Jones did *A View*

to *A Kill*, Spandau Ballet's Kemp twins did *The Krays* ("Two stars from one sperm" could have been the advertising catchline, but sadly wasn't), and the Pet Shop Boys cringed all the way through *It Couldn't Happen Here*. One year after it did — the stock markets crashed.

Paul McCartney's *Give My Regards to Broad Street* single-handedly precipitated the early 1980s financial slump, and the big wave before that consisted of the Mick Jagger and David Bowie debacles of the early 1970s.

which meant that every single service industry went on strike shortly thereafter. Pop stars being cast in films is pure financial thinking. If Ryder gets more than 30 lines in *The Avengers*, I'll be very surprised. But 30 lines is enough to get every Black Grape fan, who normally wouldn't dream of going to see

The Avengers, into the cinemas during the first week of release. When thinking like this becomes prevalent in an industry where casting directors should be thinking about who would be best in a role, rather than who would be the most amusing and lucrative, it's a sure-fire bet that the stock markets are riding feverishly high and everyone's favourite word is, once again, profit.

Of course a pop star isn't going to be as good in a role as a "proper" actor. Proper actors go through years of training, amateur stage productions, repertory and tiny roles as a dentist with a nasty rope burn in *Casualty* before they breach the big screen.

Pop stars have spent those same years trying to set fire to their own legs with lighter fuel, and attempting to burp all of *The Frog Chorus* whilst travelling from Droitwich to Hull in a Transit van. Who, I wonder, will have learnt more about human emotion and motivation?

Sadly, however, all pop stars seem to think they are good actors. "I have a public image, but it's not really me. I'm more complex than a beery, shouty man who wears odd trousers," the thinking goes. "So, I'm, like, acting when I'm on stage and doing interviews."

No, you're not, as I'm no more writing a novel when I get together 800 words about a Chumbawamba gig. Drunken big idiots. Still, I don't blame pop stars for wanting to go all TV and films on us. When Nick Berry from *Heartbeat*, Jimmy Nail, Robson and Jerome, Kylie Minogue and that Natalie bird from *Neighbours* have all cluttered up the Top Ten in recent months and years, instead of shunting in trailers desperately trying to memorise the words "But Mrs Dryden, I can't", then this current air of tit for tat is understandable.

Understandable, that is, until the stock markets crash, and they all have to go back to mini-cabbing for a living.



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"73 MINUTES OF GENIUS" *The Standard*

"DYLAN IS AT HIS CREATIVE PEAK" *The Independent*

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THE ALBUM TIME OUT OF MIND OUT NOW

Don't bang on about canons

If jazz is not to become like Baroque music, it has to roll with the times.

Pat Metheny tells Clive Davis

Just before coming to London, Pat Metheny had been a guest of honour at a new cultural centre devoted to Kansas City's musical heritage. A local boy made good, Metheny served part of his apprenticeship in the town that produced Charlie Parker and the Count Basie orchestra, so it gave him particular pleasure to be invited along with the likes of Tony Bennett.

One thing troubled him, however. When he looked at a chronology outlining the history of jazz, he saw that it stopped at 1968 — the implication being that the past three decades have been little more than an elaborate process of embalming.

Metheny, who has been at

his regular group — featuring keyboard player Lyle Mays — after two years of more varied collaborative recordings. Beyond *The Missouri Sky*, a series of introspective duets with his close friend Charlie Haden, the bass player, has been one of the surprise best-sellers of the year. He can also be heard on Michael Brecker's acclaimed *Tales From the Hudson*. A few weeks ago came the howling dissonances of *The Sign of 4*, a gruelling atonal session with free improvisation guru Derek Bailey.

To many ears, the Bailey collaboration is all but unlistenable. Yet you cannot help admiring Metheny for his determination to test himself in such inhospitable waters. He did much the same a decade ago with *Song X*, a controversial encounter with Ornette Coleman.

All of which forms a steady contrast to the pastel textures of his working band. While so many fusion guitarists get by on pure machismo, Metheny is an unfailingly subtle improviser: despite the roll call of guitar-synth technology that usually adorns his album sleeves, he produces lines of exceptional simplicity.

Lyle Mays's florid keyboards have always been much more of a drawback (though obviously not for the guitarist, since their partnership goes back 20 years). And to anyone used to the subtle cross-rhythms of acoustic jazz, the soft-rock pulse of the Metheny band tends to sound flat-footed.

But that, in a roundabout way, brings us back to his insistence on finding a path that connects with our own times. Jazz has always been at its most potent, he argues, when it has had a direct connection with the popular music of the day. The last two years of playing "straight-ahead" jazz have, if anything, brought that point home to him even more strongly.

"Even though I've enjoyed it, and it's the music I grew up with, something's been eating me about it. You know, shouldn't we be doing something more vital to the age we're living in? When I hear a Miles Davis record from the Fifties not only do I hear a great record, I get a sense of how people talked then, how they walked, what they wore. It's like a watermark built into the music. But if we don't mark our time, how is anybody going to know what it was like? They can listen to pop music and they'll find a lot of it, but there's something in jazz and improvising that is more immediate and tactile."

His latest album, *Imaginary Day*, finds Metheny back with

Pat Metheny: jazz didn't die with Miles and Louis

the top of the tree almost long enough to qualify as a grizzled veteran, sees it differently. In a career that has swung between commercially successful fusion music and the stormiest outposts of the avant-garde, his unlikely guitar hero has engaged in a quixotic search for a contemporary language.

"I'm always glad to see more people learning about the great music of the past," he says. "My concern is that I don't really believe in the idea that jazz is a repertory music. There are exceptions to be made for large ensembles, but one of the beauties of jazz is that there will never be another Miles Davis, or another Louis Armstrong. You can have tributes to all these musicians for days, but the thing that makes them great is being a one-off."

Talk of a jazz canon unsettles him most of all. "That means it's going to be like Baroque music," he says. "Unfortunately, that's a really strong trend at the moment. But I don't think it will do any major harm, because the one constant element in this music's history has been the people who have come along and said 'Yes, but...'"

His latest album, *Imaginary Day*, finds Metheny back with

Nigel Williamson finds Loudon Wainwright III a man still obsessed — with himself



Will the real Loudon Wainwright III stand up? Is this the unflinchingly naked autobiographical writer who upsets his family, or the comic, red-nosed creator of funny songs?

Natural-born performer

A lot of people keep private diaries. Loudon Wainwright III makes albums about his most personal experiences, and almost nothing is considered too intimate. He is the Alan Clark of the songwriting world, and he admits that not everyone appreciates his going public.

"Certain family members, ex-wives and children have been bridled at or been angered by some of the songs," he says. "But I try to be truthful. I look at what I write and ask, is this true or is it grandiose? There is a craft in songwriting that maybe causes you to exaggerate, but art works best when it's honest."

Honesty with Wainwright seems to be a compulsion. His new album *Little Ship* is the third in a trilogy of what are, in effect, private musical diaries, an approach which has

revived interest in an erratic career which now spans almost 30 years and 16 albums. The latest effort charts a recently fractured relationship with his usual mix of wry observation, painful self-examination, heavy irony, indulgent silliness and the occasional profundity.

His last album, *Grown Man*, was a self-confessional effort about hitting the age of 50, while *History*, the album before that, was a family chronicle that made the listener feel positively voyeuristic.

"I'm an exhibitionist or a masochist. The rule of writing is to write about what you know, and I'm obsessed with myself. It's not necessarily a good thing but that's what I do. I get off on showing the warts. I am self-absorbed, but I'm so interested — to me anyway. Some people find it irritating. The artful thing is to take that self-absorption and fashion it into a three-minute song that can engage other people."

Yet there are at least two Loudon Wainwrights. If one is the unflinchingly naked autobiographical writer, the other is the comic, red-nosed performer who ever since the novelty song *Dad Stunk in 1972* — still his only hit single — has enjoyed a reputation as one of the best humorous songwriters since the days of Tom Lehrer. Despite its serious subject-matter there is

once again a rich vein of comedy running through his new album, and I ask him if he sometimes uses the humour as a self-defence to prevent facing up to awkward feelings.

"You don't think, let's add some more irony here, when you're writing a song. The low humour I use is just part of my style. But Freud said the joke is a way of allowing the unconscious to talk safely about horrible things. That's why you explode with laughter, because you've touched something deep."

"Since I am writing about sensitive subjects the humour can lighten it and make it less dreary. There was a time when I went overboard on the sarcasm and irony. I got a reputation as someone who could make an audience laugh and I allowed that to take over. And, yes, maybe I did use it as a way not to open up."

Wainwright, who trained as an actor, has always had a loyal following in Britain, particularly for his live shows. "I'm a natural performer. When I was seven I discovered that I liked showing off. When there's 2,000 people in the dark watching and the lights are all on you, I find that delightful," he says.

In the early part of his career, along with Bruce

Springsteen, Jesse Winchester and various other long-forgotten singer-songwriters, he competed for the tag "the new Dylan". It was a silly tag which he is still having to deal with a quarter of a century later, even though his style has never remotely resembled the great man's. "We use the same chords," he remarks caustically. "My songs have always been very specific, nothing cryptic, very little allegory. Dylan's songs are mysterious and strange and fabulous. I'm much more mundane."

As part of a large group of pop performers still making music in their fifties, Wainwright is also different in that he is one of the few confident enough to tackle the subject of ageing. "I've always written about what is happening, and one of the things that is going on is that I'm getting older. It's horrible but it's so interesting

to write about. To pretend that it isn't happening would seem very strange. I was watching the Rolling Stones launch their new tour and they have to present this image of swaggering around. It must be very tiring for them."

Surprisingly Wainwright has seldom turned his acid powers of observation on the political world, although he does sometimes perform topical songs on American National Public Radio. "It's easy to attack Newt Gingrich or make fun of Bill Clinton, it's like musical journalism. But I never was a radical. I grew my hair and smoked dope and sat around but I was much too self-absorbed to be political. I didn't march or protest although I did dodge the draft. I've always been more concerned with the politics of me."

Writing, he says, is like fishing. "You're sitting out

there in the boat for hours but when you've got one it doesn't take long to land it. I'm fishing all the time but I can go long periods with nothing, then a batch of them comes along." He looks forward to the day when he is eclipsed by the success of two of his children, Rufus and Martha, now recording artists in their own right.

"I've brought them on in my own shows but they're so talented to make that dangerous. I'm hoping they're going to be very successful and buy me a house someday soon. Until then I'll just carry on sitting in the boat."

● *Little Ship* is released by Virgin. Loudon Wainwright plays London Union Chapel tonight and tomorrow. Oxford Playhouse Sunday, Liverpool Philharmonic Hall Oct 26, Glasgow Royal Concert Hall Oct 30 and Warwick Arts Centre Oct 31

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GIVEN that the bulk of tenor saxophonist Joe Henderson's much-lauded 1990s studio work has consisted of Grammy-attracting concept albums centring on music by, or associated with, the likes of Billy Strayhorn, Miles Davis and Antonio Carlos Jobim, cynics might be forgiven for approaching his latest project — Gershwin's *Porgy & Bess* — with a certain degree of wariness. The sheer class and consummate artistry of the result, however — as with all the above albums — swiftly dispels such criticism. Henderson's neat, elegant sextet and septet arrangements, centred on his own peerless soloing, perfectly complemented by guitarist John Scofield, eloquently reproduce all the opera's emotional subtleties, and even the obligatory guest vocal appearances by Chaka Khan and Sting are relatively painless. The uniquely cultured power of Henderson's playing with just the rhythm section — drummer Jack DeJohnette and bassist Dave Holland — though, will make

JAZZ ALBUMS

many of his admirers think nostalgically of his classic trio albums, *The State of the Tenor* and *The Standard Joe*.

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EDUCATION

'I didn't expect respect'

Susan Elkin on
the independent
headmistress
who spent a
week teaching
'the other side'

When the BBC offered Gillian duCharme, Headmistress of Benenden School, the independent girls' boarding school near Cranbrook, Kent, the opportunity to spend a week teaching in a London comprehensive, she was thrilled.

"I agreed immediately," Mrs duCharme says, adding sharply. "Wouldn't you have done?" I'm not sure I would have the courage to be filmed, perhaps floundering, in an environment quite different from my normal habitat.

But Mrs duCharme is dismissive of my feeble misgivings. "The opportunity to see how a comprehensive works from within was irresistible. I've wanted to do something like that for years. I saw it as a marvellous chance to open up some real debate between the maintained and the independent sectors."

The BBC2 series *Back to the Floor*, produced by Adam Wishart, takes six captains of industry, including a general, a head of a travel company and the chief executive of a hospital trust, and puts them on the shopfloor of their profession.

How do they cope? How do they react to what they find at the grass roots? How do the people they work with relate to them when they are stripped of their seniority?

For Mrs duCharme it involved spending most of the week as a supply teacher at Forest Gate Community School, an 11 to 16 mixed, 1,000-pupil school in East London. In 1996 23 per cent of its comprehensive intake pupils achieved 5 GCSEs at A-C grades. "I was picked up on Monday morning and driven to Forest Gate," she says. "I didn't know where we were going until we got there."

During the week she taught French and English, led an assembly for 21 year seven pupils and took 30 boys swimming. She found the classroom work difficult. Supply teachers have a hard task establishing themselves effectively. A camera crew in the room cannot make it any easier. "I didn't expect to command instant respect," she says with disarming humility, "and I didn't get it."

Some classes were restive and inevitably there was a strain amount of playing to the camera. "I tried very hard," she says, "and it was tortifying when, sometimes, didn't go well. I got pretty frustrated at times, although I



Top, Gillian duCharme, Headmistress of Benenden and, below, Forest Gate, where she spent a week teaching

know I would have cracked it quite quickly if I'd been there for longer."

So it was an intellectual exercise, what did she learn? One of the things which struck her forcibly, and which by implication does not apply at Benenden, but which any experienced supply teacher could have told her, is that children vary their behaviour according to the expectations of their regular teacher. "I was surprised that one class behaved badly in an English lesson, but were much better when I took them for French."

She also expresses puzzlement about the purpose of support teachers, having now encountered several. "In one lesson there was another adult in the room. No one mentioned his presence or told me why he was there. He didn't seem to be doing much."

Another support teacher admitted to her, presumably in ignorance of who she was or why she was there, that he had fled from the class.

Was this a reasonable experiment? Should the chief executive of a rural business

with a £5 million turnover necessarily be able to quell 30 noisy boys and girls in Forest Gate? "I've never taught in the maintained sector," says Mrs duCharme, a Cambridge-educated linguist. She taught for 19 years in the US, where she became head of Town School, Manhattan. Head of Benenden for 12 years, she knows every one of her 453 girls and all their parents by name and she still teaches four periods a week of French. Benenden's council — the equivalent of its governing body — last year renewed her contract for five years.

There were management lessons, too. Andy Richardson is head of Forest Gate. "Andy's style is much more formal than mine," she says. "I found myself wondering whether my pupils and staff might benefit from more formality."

When Mr Richardson and his deputy, Ben Benjamin, were invited to visit Benenden earlier this term they impressed the staff so much with their relaxed humour and competence that Alexander Stiller, teacher of English at



Benenden, commented: "If I had youngsters in an inner-city school I would be glad to entrust them to these two."

Mr Richardson told the Benenden staff about his tight budget and answered questions openly about governors, extracurricular activities and staff recruitment.

But how can a 40-minute programme, edited from more than 23 hours of filming, be representative? As she quips to her staff before the visit by Mr Richardson and Mr Benjamin: "Perhaps when the film comes out we'll all be sacked."

Somewhat I doubt it. ● Back to the Floor, 9.50pm, BBC2, November 4.

Estelle Morris on proposals in the Green Paper

Helping children with special needs

Tackling problem behaviour is top of the list of concerns in many schools. Teachers are working hard to find ways of keeping children with behavioural problems in mainstream schools. They know that, once excluded from the mainstream, youngsters find it difficult to re-enter. Often they move on to poor job prospects and even crime.

Because this is a key problem, early comment on our Green Paper on special educational needs (SEN), *Excellence For All Children*, has focused on the small proportion of children with SEN who exhibit behavioural problems.

The Green Paper sets out specific proposals: support for primary schools with children with behavioural difficulties, and imaginative new approaches — sometimes outside school — for older youngsters.

Next month we begin to develop the work of special schools for children with behavioural difficulties. We have also announced £21 million from the Standards Fund to help to tackle exclusion and truancy problems, and will shortly be advising local education authorities on ways in which they can help to tackle behavioural problems.

But the Green Paper is dealing with a larger group: the one in five children who at some stage in their school lives have special needs ranging from autism to blindness, physical disability to learning difficulties.

We want to identify problems when children are starting in education. Baseline assessment for five-year-olds and our focus on literacy and numeracy will be crucial, and will identify dyslexia and specific learning difficulties early on.

Nineteen out of 20 children with special educational needs are already in mainstream schools. But there are children in special schools who could also benefit, educationally and socially, from being in the mainstream. Their classmates, too, will benefit, provid-



Disabled children benefit from being at mainstream schools

ed the right support is there.

This is not a dogmatic approach. We want what is right for the child, and we want parents and families to have information about the options from the start. More inclusion can help those with special needs to play a greater part in society, but we also recognise the fears of some parents that increased inclusion will disrupt their children's education.

Increasing inclusion will therefore be a continuing process: inspiration for it will come from those schools that demonstrate that including a wide range of children with special needs and improving academic standards go hand in hand.

There is no question of "forcing" difficult children on unwilling schools. Nor is there any question of removing parents' rights. We want to help parents, too, by cutting through red tape. We want to ensure that they have the support they need at every stage. Statementing — producing the legal document detailing the help a school should give — can be a difficult process during which the needs of the child are not being met. Improved dialogue, and better targeting of resources so that schools can provide children directly with the support they need, should take the pressure off this process.

Many children will continue to need — and get — a

statement. But others will benefit from earlier support in the classroom. We want to achieve that, while giving parents greater confidence that the school will meet their child's needs.

Part of this approach will mean encouraging more parent-partnership schemes, such as those working well in Bradford and Somerset. These give parents clear information about the options, and involve them in taking decisions about their child's future. We hope that we can reduce the need for parents to go to tribunals, where appeals are running at 2,000 a year.

There is a continuing and vital role for special schools. They will remain the most appropriate place for some children but not always for the whole of their school career. I also want to see special schools becoming specialist schools, centres of excellence with their facilities and teachers' expertise used to support children with special needs in mainstream schools.

In the new year we shall draw up an action programme to drive forward improvements during this Parliament. It will be phased to avoid placing too heavy a burden on schools. This is a priority area for the Government as more money becomes available.

● The author is Junior Minister for School Standards with responsibility for special educational needs.

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THE TIMES

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TOMORROW: ADVENTURES OVERSEAS

CHANGING TIMES

When greater choice means less, not more

Schools have been quick to pick up the black arts of marketing. At a recent Isis (Independent Schools Information Service) exhibition at the NEC in Birmingham, prospective parents were assailed with almost identical presentations by the schools taking part. Tastefully arranged photographs of the dining hall, gymnasium, rugby pitch and netball courts of one educational establishment could have been easily swapped with those of the neighbouring stall without much difference being noted. The same reliable blue background of each display, subtly lit, provided nothing but an impression of the overall state of public school education today.

When the old grammar schools were faced with the choice of closing, turning comprehensive or becoming a private establishment, some opted for the third choice with the result that parents who traditionally would have sent their children to boarding school were happy to find a cheaper but good private day-school within reach. This had a knock-on effect throughout the private education system, with boarding schools scrambling for day pupils and single-sex schools engaging in expensive projects in order to become coeducational.

This cumulative movement rolled on until it reached our best schools. We all gasped in horror as one time-bonoured exclusively male establishment after another joined the race to admit females.

Religion, too, was found to be very adaptable. Roman Catholic schools not only accepted but set out to woo non-Catholic pupils and, most amazingly, one of our very top and exclusive public schools, the foundations of the 'establishment', heretofore predomi-

Damian Ettinger worries that in the rush to appeal to all parents, schools may lose their character

WE'RE MORE THAN HAPPY TO ACCEPT NON-CATHOLICS, MR ZARG



nantly Church of England, have made special provision to admit Catholic pupils, pulling boys away from the traditional Catholic education offered by the likes of Ampleforth, Downside, Stonyhurst, etc.

From the local private kindergarten to the brightest and best in the land, there has occurred a stewing and stirring that has produced a homogenous glut of educational institutes that scrum for every unlikely candidate with the wherewithal to pay the fees.

Competition is supposed to be stimulating for us all, but personally I have always found co-operation of superior mutual benefit.

Parents and pupils have suffered most from this headlong rush to ruin, as real choice has been removed from their plans for their children. The standards of tuition in these schools have not fallen in any sense, I am sure. Nor have the facilities they offer in any way deteriorated. Quite the opposite. It is simply that, in order to survive, they feel they must appeal to the broadest section of the public and could, in so doing, lose the distinctive qualities, built up over generations, for which they are famed.

It may seem as if I am against coeducational schools. This is not so. Schools built for coeducation have served the needs well of those parents who wished their children to attend a mixed school and they too must now feel the pinch as more schools, traditionally single sex, turn coeducational. As a housemaster at an all-boys Catholic boarding school offering traditional Catholic education, where non-Catholics have sometimes been admitted but never converted, I see no sense or benefit to good schools if they purposely cross the denominational borders in order to poach prospective pupils from each other. Change is good if it serves some purpose, and in some cases modernisation is needed. But are the wishes of parents and pupils served by simply removing the unique qualities that once adorned our schools and replacing them with the sales pitch, "We take girls, boys, C of E, Jews, Catholics, Muslims, Baptists, Mastercard, American Express and Visa?"

● The author is House Master of Plunkett House, the junior department of Downside School near Bath.

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St Christopher School
Letchworth, Herts SG9 3JZ
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GOVERNORS

Applications are invited for the post of Bursar and Clerk to the
Governors to commence 1 April 1998.

The Bursar, who is a member of the Senior Management Team,
reports through the Headmistress on the daily running of the
School and, as the Clerk to the Governors, directly to the Board of
Governors on financial matters.

Applicants must have ability and experience in financial and
business management and experience of responsibility at a
senior level.

Salary: circa £28,000
Full details of the post are available from the Bursar.

Applications, with full CV and the names, addresses and
telephone numbers of two referees should be sent to The Chairman
of Governors, Saint Martin's, Bruton Avenue, Solihull, West
Midlands, B91 3EH. Tel: 0121 705 1265.

Please mark the envelope "Confidential/Bursar"
Closing date for applications: Wednesday 5 November 1997
Saint Martin's is a registered charity
(528962) for the education of girls.

DIRECTOR OF QUALITY ASSESSMENT
TEACHER TRAINING AGENCY

c. £48,000

The Teacher Training Agency has a central role in the Government's drive to raise standards in schools. Established in 1994, and with a budget of some £200 million, the TTA aims to improve the quality of teaching, raise standards of teacher training and promote teaching as a profession.

The Director of Quality Assessment is an important and sensitive job: advising the TTA's Board and Senior Management Group on all quality issues, and leading the team responsible for providing the information on quality the TTA needs to assess teacher training institutions. The Director will play a major part in the TTA's relationships with these institutions, with OFSTED and other Government bodies.

Key responsibilities include:

- ensuring the TTA has reliable, timely evidence on quality to inform its decisions on funding;
- managing TTA's relationships with OFSTED;
- advising the TTA's Board on accreditation of teacher training providers.

If you could make an outstanding contribution to the work of the TTA please send a short covering letter summarising how your skills and attributes will enable you to do so with your CV to James Morgan, who is advising on this appointment, at MORGAN HARRIS BURROWS, Kington, Warwickshire CV35 9JN. (FAX: 01526 640181). Letters should be received by November 14

MHB
MORGAN HARRIS BURROWS



Silk Cut a disappointing fourth after first leg of Whitbread race

Frustrated Smith keeps eye on prize

FROM EDWARD GORMAN
SAILING CORRESPONDENT
IN CAPE TOWN

THIS was not how Lawrie Smith wanted to finish the first leg of a Whitbread Round the World Race that he has more chance of winning than any of the other three that he has sailed in. Fourth place for his purple and white *Silk Cut* was never part of his winning strategy, which called for steady seconds and thirds all the way to overall honours next May.

Smith was disappointed after drifting across the finishing line at dawn here yesterday, almost two days after the winner, Paul Cayard in *EF Language*. The *Silk Cut* crew members who, on their day, are the most gung-ho in the fleet, were subdued as they went through the

DISTANCE TO FINISH	First leg (Southampton to Cape Town) Problems (at 02.00 GMT yesterday, with miles to Cape Town):
1. <i>Silk Cut</i> (UK)	1,000 (11.00) 11.00
2. <i>EF Language</i> (USA)	1,000 (11.00) 11.00
3. <i>Merit</i> (UK)	1,000 (11.00) 11.00
4. <i>Silk Cut</i> (UK)	1,000 (11.00) 11.00
5. <i>Merit</i> (UK)	1,000 (11.00) 11.00
6. <i>Merit</i> (UK)	1,000 (11.00) 11.00
7. <i>Merit</i> (UK)	1,000 (11.00) 11.00
8. <i>Merit</i> (UK)	1,000 (11.00) 11.00
9. <i>Merit</i> (UK)	1,000 (11.00) 11.00
10. <i>Merit</i> (UK)	1,000 (11.00) 11.00

motions of spraying a little champagne around for the camera. Clearly they were preoccupied with the feeling that fate had dealt them a less than fair hand on what Gordon Maguire, Smith's second in command, described as the most bizarre leg that he has ever experienced in his own long Whitbread career. There were no excuses, though, just a matter-of-fact explanation of what had gone on and a collective impatience to get on with the next stage, when they might do themselves justice.

Smith, who left Southampton a month ago feeling the pressure, appeared far more relaxed yesterday. He seemed confident that, despite this initial disappointment, he has a boat and a team that are capable of winning this race. Sometimes, when things are not going well, Smith has the habit of casting around for scapegoats and complaining, but this was not in evidence yesterday as he surveyed the past 31 days at sea.

"We're not at all unhappy with the way things are going," he said. "Obviously, fourth is not as good as the top three, but you can win the race with a fourth." He said that once the leading boats had got



A subdued Smith reflects on a disappointing first leg after arriving in Cape Town yesterday. Photograph: Mike Hewitt/Allsport

ahead — *Silk Cut* was only nine miles adrift of *EF Language* just north of the Cape Verde Islands — they were always improving their position as they consistently sailed into the new breeze first. Unlike north-south legs in the past, there were no opportunities this time for the trailing boats to catch up. "I don't think it was a navigator's leg, it was more a question of if you were leading by a mile, this quickly became ten miles then 100 miles and so on," Smith said.

If *Silk Cut* had made mistakes it was in taking too many spares, which added unnecessary weight, and choosing what Maguire

described as too "conservative" a sail wardrobe. "We covered all windspeeds and angles whereas, in hindsight, we could have dropped out all the heavy-weather gear and just gone with light stuff and be off, but that was a very high-risk strategy," Maguire said.

In the event, *Silk Cut* sailed in light or medium breezes all the way, except for one 36-hour period when the windspeed picked up to 25 knots and the boat produced the record 24-hour distance for the leg of 414 miles, bolstering Smith and Maguire's confidence that they have the pace to handle the heavy conditions that they are likely to

encounter during the next leg to Fremantle. While impressed with Cayard's performance, they suggested that he had taken exactly the risk with his sail selection that they had shied away from and they are not convinced that he will be able to maintain his first-leg form throughout the race. Maguire still sees Grant Dalton, in *Merit* Cap, as the main threat, though he has not written off Chris Dickson, in *Toshiko*, who is due in today. It was noticeable that *Silk Cut* returned to the dock almost completely undamaged. There was one ripped spinnaker but nothing else.

This is in marked contrast to many of the other boats, including *Merit*. One consequence of this is that Smith should have more time to concentrate on sail selection than some of his rivals in the run-up to the restart on November 8. Robert Scheidt, of Brazil, has claimed his third successive Laser world championship by winning with a race to spare at Algarrobo in Chile. Nik Surholt, of New Zealand, was second with Ben Ainslie, of Great Britain, finishing third for the second successive year. Ainslie's fellow Briton, Hugh Styles, was fifth in the 128-strong field.

Edwards forced to bow to wind of change

REBECCA STEPHENS



on the agony of failure

TRACEY EDWARDS, the skipper of *Royal and Sun Alliance*, the giant catamaran, made a decision at 6.45pm yesterday to pull out of her record-breaking attempt to sail around the British Isles because of light winds. "I'm devastated," she said. "Particularly having spent the last two days splashing around in horrendous weather and the girls having worked so hard."

"To give up now is very difficult, but we always knew that the first two days would be good days and that the forecast for the last two days was OK. It was the middle day, Wednesday, that looked variable — and so it was. Having covered 400 nautical miles on the first day and a further 340 nautical miles on the second day, travelling at average speeds well above those of Steve Fossett's record-breaking boat, *Lakota*, we made only 120 nautical miles on day three. The winds were just too light and variable."

I felt a sudden overwhelming sorrow for Tracey and her crew. They had worked so hard and waited so long for the best conditions — and now this. I also realised that I felt sorry for me, as well. In three days that I have been with them, I have been made to feel as if I am one of them. "Now, we just have to be positive, head for home and repair the damage to the boat before we set out for the Jules Verne Trophy, which is the big one," Tracey said.

Damage to the boat includes broken halyard shackles and sails, but Tracey added: "Because the conditions have been so awful, it's been a great learning curve for everyone. For some of the girls it was their first time steering in heavy weather and they did brilliantly."

The writing was on the wall the previous night when I had woken up, not to the usual crashing of waves over the hull, but to a sound rarely heard at sea — that of near-total silence. I lay motionless, but for a gentle drift that was barely perceptible. We had been becalmed.

The *Royal and Sun Alliance* and its all-female crew will now be heading for the southern hemisphere in pursuit of that most coveted prize of all, the Jules Verne Trophy, for non-stop circumnavigation. For the boat itself, it's not an unfamiliar trip as, under the name ENZA and with Sir Robin Knox-Johnston and Sir Peter Blake at the helm, it held the trophy for three years.

Their record was broken only last May by Olivier de Kersanton, of France, and his crew of six on the trimaran, *Sportec*. The speed record that Tracey and her crew will be attempting to break in December is 71 days 14 hours and 22 minutes.

ROUND BRITAIN AND IRELAND RECORD ATTEMPT

Tracey Edwards
3rd day
155 miles

START
Southampton
Mon 1.5.97

RUGBY UNION: THREE CLUBS ALIVE TO PITFALLS OF PROFESSIONALISM

Natal coach asked to help Wales prepare

By DAVID HANDS
RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

WALES, who take up temporary tenure of Wembley this season while the new Arms Park stadium is being redeveloped, will invite Ian McIntosh to help to prepare the national squad for the two pre-Christmas internationals. McIntosh, the former South Africa coach, arrives next week on a long visit during which he will also spend time with leading club coaches.

John Bevan, the Welsh Rugby Union's new director of coaching, hopes that the man who has taken Natal to a series of Currie Cup triumphs during the 1990s can also help to implement the fast-track policy that is crucial to Wales's hopes of developing their attacking style. That style will receive the ultimate examination from New Zealand at Wembley on November 23.

There are hopes that the All Blacks will attract a crowd in excess of 50,000, even though England play South Africa at Twickenham, on the other side of London, the same day. Welsh clubs are clearly not optimistic of disposing of their tickets since several have contracted London Welsh to ask if they require more.

"Playing in England is something we have to come to terms with," Kevin Bowring, the Wales coach, said yesterday after a tour of inspection at Wembley, where his players will also meet Scotland and France in the new year. "I hope the impartial observer will get behind the underdogs — if that is what we are — when we play the All Blacks."

Wales hope that their 1999 internationals can be played in Cardiff, even though the stadium is not due for completion until the summer of that year.

Wales A will field four Pontypool players when they meet New Zealand at Sardis Road.

Wales A (v New Zealand, Pontypool, November 11): M Back (Swansea), G Evans (Llanelli), D Jones (Pontypool), L Jones (Pontypool), A Moore (Pontypool), C Jones (Pontypool), C Jones (Pontypool), C Jones (Pontypool), C Jones (Pontypool), C Jones (Pontypool).

Assault on the summit tempered by caution

David Hands says the watchword is realism at Leeds, Worcester and Old Deer Park

Ambition and money are not confined to the Allied Dunbar Premiership. One of the defining games of the season in the Jewsons National League will be played just off the M5 at the Sixways Ground tomorrow, when Worcester meet London Welsh in the hope of retaining the leadership of the first division.

Though they are by 14 years the older club, Worcester have a history of comparative anonymity, whereas London Welsh, 25 years ago, could claim to be one of the strongest sides in Europe. It is no coincidence that these clubs, together with Leeds in third place, are leading the push for promotion.

They are the ones with new money and, critically, the time to adjust to the demands of professionalism. Clubs below the Premiership do not have an ideally structured season but they have what their seniors crave, a degree of continuity which allows them to make haste slowly: clubs in the Premiership have been hives of feverish activity since professionalism was agreed because they have elite positions to protect.

Clubs such as Worcester seek to join them but they have the distinct advantage of being able to watch from a distance. "We may arrive at the right moment when more realistic prices prevail," Cecil Duckworth, of Worcester, said, while Phil Lewis suggests that London Welsh have time to put playing and administrative structures in place which Premiership clubs have been forced to do on the run.

IRELAND will be without Jeremy Davidson for their pre-Christmas internationals, and possibly the five nations championship (David Hands writes). The London Irish lock requires an operation to repair knee ligaments damaged against Gloucester on Sunday and could be missing for six months.

Davidson, 23, was one of the primary successes of the British Isles tour in South Africa last year, and with Keith Wood, Paul Wallace and Eric Miller, was expected to provide the nucleus of a successful Irish

"The escalation in the price people pay for players does concern me," Duckworth, the millionaire businessman whose cash has projected Worcester into the national consciousness, said. "You have to attract large crowds and, at club level, apart from a few like Leicester or Gloucester or Bath, they are not there and nor is the culture."

"You don't change this in five minutes. You can build a crowd but it's not happening yet." That, argue the first-division owners, is because the public never knew when their local team is going to play; in the Jewsons League, clubs have a strong run until December, their league programme interrupted only by commitments in the cup, in which they may be drawn at

home anyway. Admittedly, attendances will be affected by the lure of internationals in November and December is a month substantially lost to the county championship. Moreover, the season somewhat trickles away from mid-March onwards.

"Our systems should really be in place for the time we really arrive," Lewis, chief executive of London Welsh, said. "We have overloads but nothing like those of the big boys. We have taken a view that London Welsh is still primarily a members' club and long may it continue."

They, Worcester and Leeds can plan coherent development to match their anticipated playing success. "There is no point having an international squad when you are in national division one," Duckworth said. That has not stopped him signing Christian Barrea from Argentina, though the scrum half must delay joining Worcester because of a family illness.

He has also brought in Les Cusworth, the former England assistant coach, as director of rugby, to handle the way forward at a ground where he hopes, in time, to establish a capacity of 10,000 with facilities to match.

"Ideally, we would like to be promoted at the end of this season and then look to minimise the period spent in the second division of the Premiership," Duckworth said, "but we note that Exeter and Wyke [promoted last season] seem to be struggling and we want to avoid that. But we haven't won this league yet."



Duckworth: benefactor

forward display. The news is also a blow for his club, striving to stay among the elite of the Allied Dunbar Premiership first division. On Sunday, they face Wasps, who will give Trevor Leota, the Western Samoa hooker, his first full game, but omit Simon Shaw, who has an ankle injury.

Having lost their half backs, Andy Gomarsall and Alex King, through injury, they will pair Martyn Wood with Guy Gregory and restore Rob Henderson at centre against his old club.

Martin Johnson, Davidson's captain and second-row partner in South Africa, deflected the England captaincy issue at the launch of *The Lions* Raw, his book on the tour. "If Clive [Woodward] and John [Mitchell] want me to do it, I'll be honoured and thrilled," he said. "If it's someone else, I'll get behind them and get on with my job."

Johnson, who led the Lions to a 2-1 series win and is captain of Leicester this season, is a leading contender for the role, along with Lawrence Dallaglio, captain of Wasps.

Davidson, 23, was one of the primary successes of the British Isles tour in South Africa last year, and with Keith Wood, Paul Wallace and Eric Miller, was expected to provide the nucleus of a successful Irish

FOR THE RECORD

ATHLETICS

SHANGHAI: China National Games. Women's 5,000m: 1. Jiang Bo (China) 17:20.2. 2. Wang Yanyan (China) 17:28.2. 3. Li Xue (China) 17:38.2. 4. Li Xue (China) 17:48.2. 5. Li Xue (China) 17:58.2. 6. Li Xue (China) 18:08.2. 7. Li Xue (China) 18:18.2. 8. Li Xue (China) 18:28.2. 9. Li Xue (China) 18:38.2. 10. Li Xue (China) 18:48.2.

BASEBALL

WORLD SERIES: Cleveland 10, Florida 2 (post-of-seven series tied 2-2).

BASKETBALL

EUROPEAN CUP: Group D: Alba Berlin 80, ASK Arona 78. Group E: Maccabi Tel Aviv 85, Maccabi Rishon LeZion 75. Group F: Maccabi Tel Aviv 85, Maccabi Rishon LeZion 75. Group G: Maccabi Tel Aviv 85, Maccabi Rishon LeZion 75. Group H: Maccabi Tel Aviv 85, Maccabi Rishon LeZion 75.

BOXING

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP: Super-middleweight: 1. David Tua (New Zealand) 12:00. 2. David Tua (New Zealand) 12:00. 3. David Tua (New Zealand) 12:00. 4. David Tua (New Zealand) 12:00. 5. David Tua (New Zealand) 12:00. 6. David Tua (New Zealand) 12:00. 7. David Tua (New Zealand) 12:00. 8. David Tua (New Zealand) 12:00. 9. David Tua (New Zealand) 12:00. 10. David Tua (New Zealand) 12:00.

CRICKET

TEST MATCH: New Zealand 201, West Indies 110. New Zealand 201, West Indies 110. New Zealand 201, West Indies 110. New Zealand 201, West Indies 110. New Zealand 201, West Indies 110. New Zealand 201, West Indies 110. New Zealand 201, West Indies 110. New Zealand 201, West Indies 110. New Zealand 201, West Indies 110. New Zealand 201, West Indies 110.

FOOTBALL

EUROPEAN CUP: Group D: Alba Berlin 80, ASK Arona 78. Group E: Maccabi Tel Aviv 85, Maccabi Rishon LeZion 75. Group F: Maccabi Tel Aviv 85, Maccabi Rishon LeZion 75. Group G: Maccabi Tel Aviv 85, Maccabi Rishon LeZion 75. Group H: Maccabi Tel Aviv 85, Maccabi Rishon LeZion 75.

FIXTURES

FOOTBALL: 7.30pm: Arsenal v Manchester United. 8.00pm: Liverpool v Chelsea. 8.15pm: Tottenham v Manchester City. 8.30pm: Newcastle v Everton. 8.45pm: Aston Villa v West Ham. 9.00pm: Blackburn v Middlesbrough. 9.15pm: Derby v Nottingham Forest. 9.30pm: Sheffield Wednesday v Leeds. 9.45pm: Southampton v Ipswich. 10.00pm: Fulham v Cardiff. 10.15pm: Preston v Barnsley. 10.30pm: Millwall v Luton. 10.45pm: Notts County v Doncaster. 11.00pm: Shrewsbury v Exeter. 11.15pm: Torquay v Yeovil. 11.30pm: Weymouth v Dagenham. 11.45pm: Maidstone v Dover. 12.00pm: Dover v Maidstone. 12.15pm: Dover v Maidstone. 12.30pm: Dover v Maidstone. 12.45pm: Dover v Maidstone. 1.00pm: Dover v Maidstone. 1.15pm: Dover v Maidstone. 1.30pm: Dover v Maidstone. 1.45pm: Dover v Maidstone. 2.00pm: Dover v Maidstone. 2.15pm: Dover v Maidstone. 2.30pm: Dover v Maidstone. 2.45pm: Dover v Maidstone. 3.00pm: Dover v Maidstone. 3.15pm: Dover v Maidstone. 3.30pm: Dover v Maidstone. 3.45pm: Dover v Maidstone. 4.00pm: Dover v 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BASEBALL: INDIANS DISCOVER WRIGHT STUFF TO SINK AILING MARLINS AND LEVEL WORLD SERIES

Frozen Cleveland is surfer's paradise

FROM KEITH BLACKMORE
IN CLEVELAND

A BEACH bum from California proved to be the coolest customer in the coldest game in World Series history played here on Wednesday night. As the temperature plummeted to 38 degrees and snow flurries swirled around in the Jacobs Field floodlights, Jarret Wright pitched the Cleveland Indians to a 10-3 victory over the Florida Marlins in game four, levelling the best-of-seven series at 2-2.

Wright's idea of a good time is to get up before dawn and go surfing with his friends in the Pacific, something that must have seemed a million miles away when he took to the mound as the youngest starting pitcher in a World Series game for more than a decade. Like his opposite number, Tony Saunders, he is in his first season in the Major Leagues; unlike Saunders, he held his nerve on Wednesday.

The writing was on the wall after the first inning. By then,



Big break: a shattered bat fails to prevent Alomar hitting a single as the Indians take full command against the struggling Marlins

Wright was riding the wave of excitement and noise generated by his home crowd. Saunders, on the other hand, was thrashing in the water, already three runs down. He had given up a hit to the second batter, Omar Vizquel, and then a home run to Manny Ramirez, scoring them both. He then gave up a single to Matt Williams and a double to Sandy Alomar, scoring Williams.

He thrashed his way through the second inning but in the third, Cleveland, like a pack of sharks, tore him to pieces. Ramirez walked, then advanced to second as Saunders threw poorly to first base. There was blood in the water and panic spread. Edgar Renteria, the short stop, took a routine groundball from Justice and hurried it past the poor first baseman again, allowing Ramirez to score. Saunders walked another batter, gave up another hit and a run and then walked Jim

Thome to load the bases. That was it for Saunders — and, as it turned out, for the Marlins, too.

Antonio Alfonseca, the relief pitcher, allowed only one of the runners to score, a noble effort, but the Marlins trailed by six.

Wright, meanwhile, was cruising, or whatever it is surfers do when the going is good. He gave up a single run in the fourth but did not make a serious mistake until the sixth, when Moises Alou hammered a pitch over the leftfield wall, scoring two runs. After that, it was back to the safety and comfort of the dugout, leaving another rookie, Brian Anderson, to finish the job.

Up in the stands, Clyde Wright, Jarret's father, looked down proudly. Clyde had a modestly successful career as

a Major League pitcher himself, starting 100 games mostly for the California Angels and once pitching a no-hitter. Genes seem to count in baseball: two other players on the field, Alou and the Indians' catcher, Alomar, were sons of former players.

The Marlins went through the motions of fighting back, but it was too cold to repeat the trick that they had performed

on Tuesday and a two-run homer by Williams in the eighth finished them off. Many of their players wore balacavas, a concession to the weather forbidden to the Indians by their manager, Mike Hargrove. An otherwise apparently reasonable man, Hargrove will not countenance any talk of the weather being an influence on the game.

It is clearly an untenable position. Baseball, like cricket, is essentially a game of throw, hit and catch, designed to be played in the warmth of summer. And baseball, unlike cricket, ruthlessly records errors. In the first two games in balmy Florida, only one error was committed. In the first two games in freezing Cleveland, there were eight.

There is a suspicion that the general willingness among players and officials to deny the effects of the cold is part of a greater tendency to conceal or overlook the growing problems in Major League baseball. The sport, or more accurately, industry, has made a modest recovery since the players' strike of 1994, but this series has done nothing to continue the progression. The series is being played

late in the year these days because of the revenue-producing expansion of the leagues and play-offs. The later in the year they play, the greater the influence of the weather. The television ratings so far have been poor, partly because outside of Ohio and Florida these are not big teams — more like Coventry City and Southampton than Manchester United and Arsenal — and partly because play has been poor and the games unattractive.

To satisfy television, the games all start later: 8.30pm in the east for all three weekday Cleveland games. In, meantime, with games sometimes lasting more than four hours, that means few children are able to watch them. Something needs to be done, but so far nobody is ready to admit it.

GAME FOUR DETAILS

Inning	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Runs	Hits	Errors
Florida	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	3	8	2
Cleveland	3	0	3	0	0	1	2	X	0	10	15	0

Winning pitcher: Jarret Wright. Losing pitcher: Tony Saunders. Save: Brian Anderson.
Series level at 2-2

The World Series continued in Cleveland with game five last night and moves to Miami for games six and (if required) seven at the weekend. The series is being televised live in Britain by Channel 5.

SPORT IN BRIEF

Writers name Farrell player of the year

RUGBY LEAGUE: Andy Farrell, the Great Britain captain, has won the Rugby League Writers' Association player-of-the-year award after an outstanding season for Wigan Warriors, whom he led to the Premiership title (Christopher Irvine writes). The players' player award went to James Lowes, of Bradford Bulls, who is set to take over as hooker for Britain in the first British Gas international against Australia at Wembley tomorrow week, unless Keiron Cunningham recovers from a hernia operation.

Tommy Martyn, the St Helens stand-off half, who is recovering from a second knee reconstruction in 12 months, has asked for a transfer. Danny Arnold, an ever-present in the side this season, is also considering his future.

Nicholas aims to be No 1

GOLF: Alison Nicholas this weekend has a rare opportunity to become the first player to win the US Open and the European order of merit in the same season when the women's Tour winds up with the 54-hole Air France Madam Open at the New Golf de Deauville course in France. Nicholas, who became only the second Briton to win the US Open in Oregon in July, needs to win or take second place ahead of Marie-Laure de Lorenzi, of France. Helen Alfredsson, of Sweden, the leader, is not playing this weekend. Nicholas has won £88,499 on the European Tour this season.

Hamed, Eubank warned

BOXING: Naseem Hamed and Chris Eubank will be reprimanded by the British Boxing Board of Control for their fracas at Heathrow airport. John Morris, the secretary, does not envisage a full-scale inquiry into the incident but said: "It wasn't at a boxing-orientated event or a press conference. It's one of these personal disputes which obviously blew up. My view is that we shall have to deal with the matter behind the scenes and certainly issue some very tough warnings."

Courtney joins Steelers

ICE HOCKEY: Sheffield Steelers expect to complete the signing of Ed Courtney, the former National Hockey League (NHL) forward, today. Courtney, 29, spent several seasons with Kansas City in the International Hockey League before a spell with San Jose Sharks in the NHL. Last season, he was the most valuable player for the Carolina Sting in the East Coast League, scoring 54 goals. "I am delighted the Steelers have shown that faith in me," he said.

New cricket format

CRICKET: Matthew Maynard, the Glamorgan captain, will lead an England side to New Zealand on Monday for a three-match Cricket Max series. Devised by Martin Crowe, the former New Zealand batsman, Cricket Max is a 20-overs-a-side game. "It will be an interesting series and enable us to assess the value of the game and whether it can be introduced in this country," Terry Bates, the team manager, said.

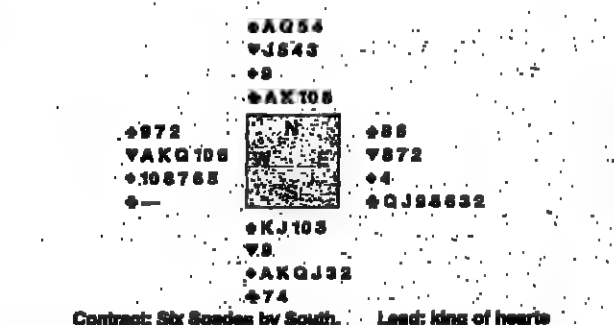
Tonga tour opener

RUGBY UNION: Tonga start their 12-game British tour with a match against a Redruth President's XV in Cornwall on Sunday. David Briggs, the Waikato prop, will captain the touring team, which will include Kuli Paletau and Sisa Tamaololo, of Ebbw Vale. The Redruth side will be bolstered by Paul Hull, the Bristol and former England full back, and Nacanielia Saumi, the Fiji international.

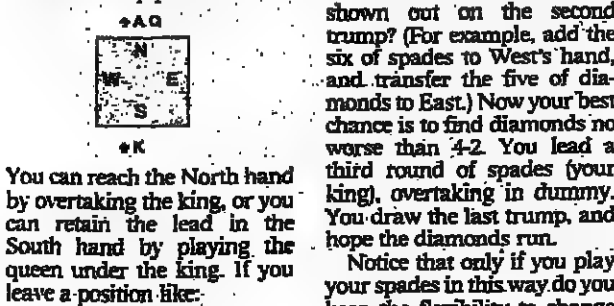
SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

BY ROBERT SHEEHAN, BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT

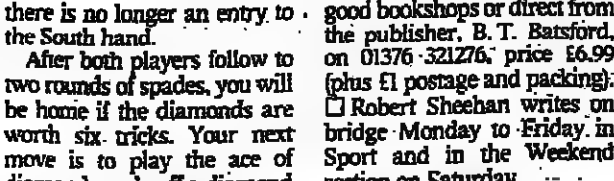
This Refresher illustrates the importance of playing a suit in which you have all the top cards in a way to keep entries flexible.



West continues hearts at trick two and declarer ruffs low. How should he continue? The first move is to cash the jack and ten of spades. Notice the flexibility of this play. This is now the trump position:



You can reach the North hand by overtaking the king, or you can retain the lead in the South hand by playing the queen under the king. If you leave a position like:



there is no longer an entry to the South hand.

After both players follow to two rounds of spades, you will be home if the diamonds are worth six tricks. Your next move is to play the ace of diamonds and ruff a diamond

- Answers on page 46
- UAKARI
a. A Zulu warrior
b. A monkey
c. A fragrant oil
 - SIRIH
a. Beret nut
b. A Sikh tribal greeting
c. Sweet potato stew
 - WARRIGAL
a. A tiresome young woman
b. A wild dog
c. A star
 - ZAPATEADO
a. A Mexican bandit
b. A fish stew
c. A stamping dance

KEENE on CHESS

BY RAYMOND KEENE, CHESS CORRESPONDENT

Kasparov's victories
Garry Kasparov has a dangerous knack of switching styles of openings and also pinpointing with vicious accuracy any weakness in the opening repertoire of his victims. In today's games from Tilburg, Kasparov demolishes one opponent with the Queen's Gambit and another with the Scotch Game. The opening style is different but the champion's aggression shines through in both cases.

White: Garry Kasparov
Black: Jeroen Elmer
Tilburg, October 1997
Queen's Gambit Accepted
1. d4 d5
2. c4 dxc4
3. e3 Nf6
4. Bxc4 e6
5. Nf3 c5
6. d5 e5
7. Bb3 d4
8. e4 Bb7
9. Nbd2 cxd4
10. e4 cxd4
11. e5 Nf6
12. Nc4 Nc6
13. Bg5 Qc7
14. Nc1 h6
15. Bf4 Bc5
16. Nf2 O-O
17. Ne4 Be7
18. Bg3 Qc8
19. Nc6 Na5
20. Bc2 d3

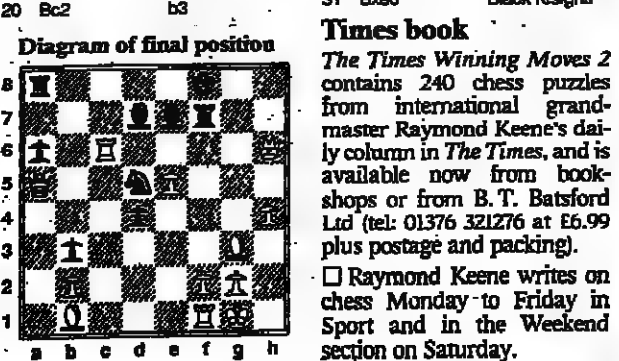


Diagram of final position
White to play. This position is from the game Reti - Asztalos, Kaschau 1914. White has infiltrated his opponent's camp with his queen and knight. He now found a neat tactic to finish the game. Can you see it?

Solution on page 46

10p

THE TIMES

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CHANGING TIMES

ACTIVE

GET IN SHAPE
SKI FASTER

BEAT BUSINESS STRESS IN ONE HOUR

Ferguson content after recording third win out of three in Champions' League

United look ahead in quest for perfection

By OLIVER HOYT
FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT

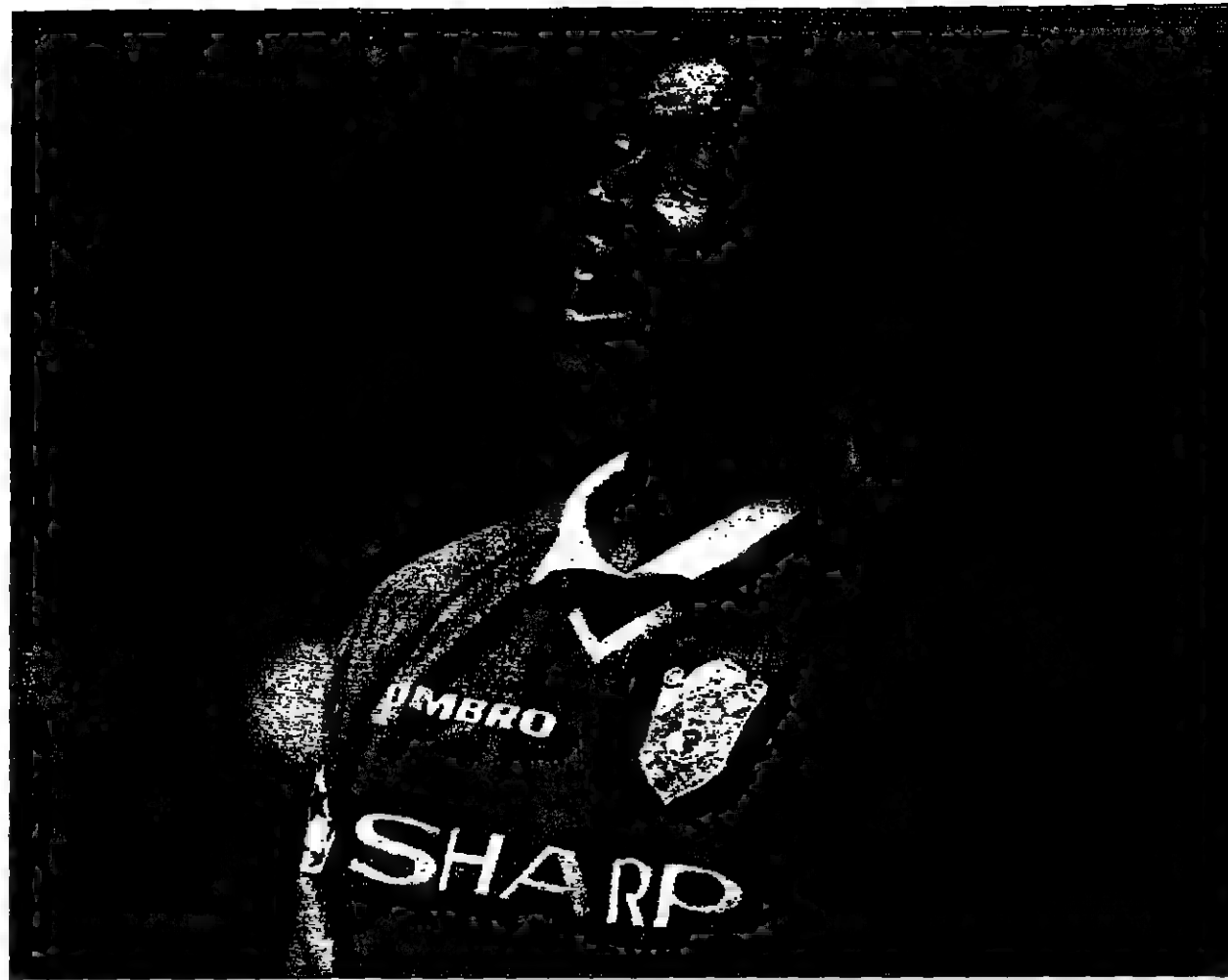
A HAPPY image was playing in Alex Ferguson's mind and for the first time in the press conference, his face creased into a smile. The victory on Wednesday night was his, after all, and Manchester United had joined Bayern Munich and Real Madrid as the only teams to have gained maximum points from their first three Champions' League games. Somebody had ventured that Gary Ballister had enjoyed himself on one surging foray in the second half. "Aye," Ferguson said, laughing. "He's the new Beckenbauer minus the shooting."

Outside, the Old Trafford pitch was quiet and dark. A few figures scurried along the touchline, dragging lengths of television cable behind them, packing up for the night. The only chink of light came from one corner of the ground in front of the old Salford End where a white canopy was stretched over the players' tunnel. Beneath it, Johan Cruyff was holding court.

He, the most respected of tacticians, said that United were strong enough to win the European Cup this season, never mind reaching the quarter-finals. There may have been an element of bias in his opinion, given the presence of his son, Jordi, among the United substitutes, but soon he, like Ferguson, was making comparisons between one of the victors and a former European Footballer of the Year.

"People say England has not produced a striker like Paul Scholes before," Cruyff said. "But when you look back to Kevin Keegan and how he played with John Toshack, I can see Scholes doing exactly the same role here. Keegan is an example of the kind of player Scholes will become. He has got good vision and an eye for goal. He sees things very early in a game and he showed that tonight."

It was Scholes who had provided the highlight of United's 2-1 win over Feyenoord with a deft piece of



Cole, the United striker, reacts after another missed chance against Feyenoord. Photograph: Marc Aspland

control with his chest inside the visitors' box and nothing more than a flick at the ball with his right foot that curled it around, rather than over, Dudek in the Feyenoord goal 13 minutes before half time.

Scholes, in particular, was worthy of Cruyff's praise and overall, United's performance was one that deserved to generate optimism. It was a display of pace and incisiveness which Giggles was once again inspirational and Sheringham and Cole produced some fine linking play, holding the ball in attack and allowing the onrushing midfielders to benefit from their astute passes.

It is a measure of just how far United have come, though, and just how seriously they

are regarded as candidates to win the competition this year, that their victory over the Dutch side, a win lent a rather unflattering hue by Voe's late goal for the visitors, was greeted with apathy and even criticism.

Most of the United players did not perform with anything like the same gusto they had in their previous win over Juventus three weeks ago but they still managed comfortably to outclass the side that finished second in the Dutch league last season. They did not lack for creativity, nor for chances. The problem once more, which put them under pressure last night and will do so again if it is not rectified, was their inability to finish.

Ferguson has made much this season of his belief that United will qualify for the quarter-finals of the competition if his team scores in every game. So far, they have obliged him handsomely. On Wednesday, though, there were echoes of the night of tortured frustration they suffered in the second leg of their semi-final against Borussia Dortmund last season when they spurned opportunity after opportunity and lost the match 1-0, and with it the tie.

In some ways, it seems iniquitous to criticise Cole because his all-round play has improved beyond recognition and too often he is made the scapegoat when things go wrong. But United did not buy

him for what he can do outside the box; they bought him to score goals on big nights such as Wednesday, and he is showing no sign of doing that consistently. Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, too, is some way short of the finished article as a foil for Sheringham.

Even though United might progress from their group without a high-class international striker, and even though they are probably one of the best teams in the competition without one, it is unlikely they will win it until they rectify the problem.

Another trip to South America to watch the Chilean, Marcelo Salas, might follow. A crack side would have punished United's players for

HOW THEY STAND	
GROUP A	GROUP B
Real Madrid 4, Borussia Dortmund 1, FC Porto 0, FC Barcelona 0 Real Madrid 2, Borussia Dortmund 0, FC Porto 0, FC Barcelona 0 Real Madrid 1, Borussia Dortmund 0, FC Porto 0, FC Barcelona 0 Real Madrid 1, Borussia Dortmund 0, FC Porto 0, FC Barcelona 0	Bayern Munich 2, PSV Eindhoven 0, FC Barcelona 0, FC Porto 0 Bayern Munich 1, PSV Eindhoven 0, FC Barcelona 0, FC Porto 0 Bayern Munich 1, PSV Eindhoven 0, FC Barcelona 0, FC Porto 0 Bayern Munich 1, PSV Eindhoven 0, FC Barcelona 0, FC Porto 0
GROUP C	GROUP D
Manchester United 2, PSV Eindhoven 0, FC Barcelona 0, FC Porto 0 Manchester United 1, PSV Eindhoven 0, FC Barcelona 0, FC Porto 0 Manchester United 1, PSV Eindhoven 0, FC Barcelona 0, FC Porto 0 Manchester United 1, PSV Eindhoven 0, FC Barcelona 0, FC Porto 0	Bayern Munich 2, PSV Eindhoven 0, FC Barcelona 0, FC Porto 0 Bayern Munich 1, PSV Eindhoven 0, FC Barcelona 0, FC Porto 0 Bayern Munich 1, PSV Eindhoven 0, FC Barcelona 0, FC Porto 0 Bayern Munich 1, PSV Eindhoven 0, FC Barcelona 0, FC Porto 0

Dalglish's forward planning thwarted

By DAVID MADDICK

EVEN after a depressing defeat by PSV Eindhoven, group C of the European Cup Champions' League looks inviting for Newcastle United, such is the quality of the opposition. With a place in the quarter-finals theirs for the taking, however, Newcastle are firing blanks.

Already, Barcelona seem to be out of the equation after gathering a sickly-looking point from three games. The English team are level with PSV, three points off the pace set by the leaders, Dynamo Kiev, but both of their main rivals will have to visit St James' Park.

Victory in those two games would surely give Newcastle the edge in a group that promised much but has so far delivered little. With a passionate home support and a fine European tradition behind them, such an outcome is hardly within the realms of fantasy.

To win, though, Newcastle must score, and therein lies the problem. At the Philips Stadion on Wednesday, they fielded a strike force that has mustered a single goal all season — and that against Hull City in the Coca-Cola Cup. The top scorer in the squad that travelled to Holland was John Beresford, a full back.

It was a point not lost on PSV, Ronald Weerman, their goalkeeper, continued to hurt his back by diving cards on the afternoon of the game. He was doubtful for the match but played, explaining: "I decided to risk it, because it was only Newcastle."

It was a sentiment echoed by Gilles de Bilde, his team-mate. The Belgian international forward is not known for his tact, and speaking after his side's 1-0 victory he delivered very disparaging remarks. "Newcastle were very disappointing," he said. "You ask the question: 'how are they going to score? It is difficult for any side to cope with the absence of Shearer and Asprilla, but they seemed content to play defensively, even when they went a goal down. Ian Rush was once a great player, but now he is not."

It was a toothless display in Eindhoven, but then — as much as Kenny Dalglish, the Newcastle manager, plays down the point — the absence of £23 million worth of striking talent tends to have such an effect. In fairness to Dalglish, when he lost Shearer at the start of the season he signed experienced cover in the form of Rush, only to lose Asprilla and have the promising Tomasson lose form. Now, any new forward signings would not be able to play until the quarter-finals.

Dalglish's tactics did not help, though. He is, by nature, deeply conservative, and a draw was a limit of his ambition in Holland. The problem was that there was no Plan B when PSV scored.

He has further problems. Both Batty and Lee were reckless in getting themselves booked and both are banned for the next match.

There also appears some dissent in the camp. Albert was an unhappy spectator as, confined to the bench, he missed the chance to impress the watching Belgium manager. Yesterday, it came as something of a surprise to hear that the defender had announced his international retirement, especially given that he had accused Dalglish, the night before, of costing him a World Cup place by dropping him.

Whatever the internal difficulties, the manager must address, somehow, his most fundamental problem, which De Bilde summed up. "We are not worried about going to Newcastle in two weeks," he said. "They have nothing with which to trouble our defence."

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Chairman stands defiant in spite of City jitters

By MATT DICKINSON



Lee: convinced

ONLY at Manchester City could the manager be heard giving the chairman a vote of confidence. Yet that is what the words of Frank Clark amounted to yesterday as he attempted to calm matters at Maine Road. Not long ago a force in Europe, City cannot now even claim to be a force in Manchester. Where they traded workplace insults with United, the club's supporters now suffer the jibes of their neighbours from Bury and Stockport County.

The defeat by Stoke City at Maine Road on Wednesday night left the

club fourth from bottom of the Nationwide League first division with two wins from 11 games. The supporters greeted the latest setback by fling out in droves long before the final whistle and shouting half-hearted demands for the dismissal of Francis Lee, the chairman.

That more than 25,000 should have turned up on an evening when United were continuing their conquest of Europe, though, is one of the reasons why Lee has no intention of standing down. After more than three years in charge, he is convinced that City has everything in place for the Premiership — except

for the small matter of the team. "Everything from the Kappa kit deal, the superstore, the Brother sponsorship and the new training ground, is there," he said at the annual general meeting this month.

"We are at the point where we should have been three years ago. We have the wherewithal to generate our own money and to be considered one of the biggest clubs in the Premiership. The only thing we are waiting for is for the people who pull on the shirts on Saturday to join in. I don't mean that facetiously."

The players themselves may take some convincing. While Clark has

spent less than 12 months in the job, his purchases so far appear to have been players capable of keeping a team in the first division rather than getting one out of it. George Kinkladze's talents have been submerged by the mediocrity of the division and Uwe Rösler remains on the transfer list with no solution imminent.

Clark angrily dismisses talk of relegation to the second division and Lee is so convinced that he has offered to let the Kappa deal stand should that happen. There appears to be no immediate end to the problems, however, and Clark is

battening down the hatches for a long, hard winter.

Arsenal sold the Holland international winger, Glenn Heider, to NAC Breda for an undisclosed fee yesterday. He cost Arsenal £2.3 million when George Graham signed him from Vitesse Arnhem in 1995. Fulham confirmed yesterday that they are holding talks with the unsettled West Bromwich Albion striker, Paul Peschisoli, after the club agreed a fee of £1.1 million. West Brom in turn were reported to have signed the Ireland international striker, Mickey Evans, from Southampton for £750,000.

Billericay banish promotion blues

NON-LEAGUE FOOTBALL BY WALTER GAMMIE

THE FA Cup fourth qualifying round tie between Billericay Town and Camberley Town at New Lodge tomorrow will ensure that there will be at least one newcomer in the first round when the draw is made in the evening.

Camberley, the lowly Isthmian League third division club, have battled their way to this stage for the first time since the 1933-34 season, when they were beaten by Northfleet United. Their run has already seen them win at Grays Athletic, leaders of the first division, in which Billericay play, but their hosts are confident, having last Saturday knocked Grays out of the FA Umbro Trophy.

Rod Moore, the Billericay chairman, said: "It's the third time we've been in the fourth qualifying round but it's the best opportunity we've had."

Billericay's form line is impressive. Until beaten at home

by Aldershot Town last week, they had won ten matches in succession and risen to fourth place in the table.

"We came within one point of promotion last year," Moore said. "I talked things over long and hard with John Kendall, the manager, and we decided that to take the club that stage further, we needed more experienced players. To see how hard it is to get out of this league you just have to look at Aldershot, with all their resources, who have been trying to do it for four years."

The recruits this season have included Dave Root, the former Kingstonian and Hendon goalkeeper, Billy Gouldstone, formerly of Chelsea and Grays, and Andy Theodosiou, who has played for Dover Athletic and Crawley Town. They have helped Billericay to

cope with the defeat on the final day of last season that cost them promotion. Riding the high of an 18-match unbeaten run, Billericay needed victory at Berkhamstead Town — but lost 2-0.

"The atmosphere at the club this week is the same as before that match," Moore said. "We played a reserve match on Tuesday and there were all kinds of people there who wouldn't normally see — all talking about the cup match."

Moore, 47, is managing director of Union Star Line, a shipping company based in Hainault. It was loyalty to the town where he was born and bred that drew him to the club. But he also believes his FA coaching badge and the work he has done at both youth and senior levels helps his relationship with Kendall, a servant of the club for 20 years. With a

businessman's head for figures, he charts the club's rising prosperity.

"We've done a roadshow in the town and started a junior membership scheme, which for £1 buys a season ticket. We've got 127 members. We're selling the principle that, even without a junior membership, a family with two children can come down for under £10 whereas at the Arsenal and Chelsea it would be about £20 each."

In playing terms the target set is "promotion, the first round of the FA Cup and the first round of the Trophy". Victory, tomorrow, Moore says, will go some way towards "laying a ghost. There are a lot of people at the club who talk of everything in terms of the Seventies successes [FA Vase winners in 1976, 1977 and 1979]. I'd like them to think of the club in terms of today's achievements."

Ten-year-old on the spot to win a fortune

David Powell on penalty shoot-out challengers facing a nerve-racking ordeal in front of 15,000 fans

A 10-year-old boy is backing his own skills, rather than nominating an adult in his place, in an attempt to win £107,000 in a football penalty shoot-out competition on Sunday. The prize to the winner is the biggest sum ever guaranteed to a fan in a football-related promotion.

Chris Squire, a primary school pupil from Barnstaple, Devon, is one of five finalists who will line up in front of Phil Parkes, the former England goalkeeper, during the half-time break of the Nationwide League first division match between Queens Park Rangers and Manchester City. The other four will be adults, one a woman.

The shoot-out is the climax to a breakfast cereal competition in which the rules allow the finalists to send out an experienced penalty-taker on their behalf, provided the substitute has no professional or semi-professional ex-

perience. Chris, though, will be doing the job himself as he and his parents have put the thrill of the occasion before the money.

"This is a very, very special day for Chris," Martin Squire, Chris's father, said. "No matter how much money I could earn, I would never be able to buy him an experience like this. It is something he is going to remember all his life. No doubt we will be hearing about it for months." The last one to miss in the sudden-death shoot-out takes the money.

Chris has been practising hard at the ground where he plays every Saturday. "I cannot believe I am going out in front of a crowd of 15,000," he said. "I normally only play in front of

about 20. I have been telling all my school friends but they do not really believe me. One said: 'Oh yes? And I am going to get a kiss from the Spice Girls.'"

Glenn Hoddle, the England coach, chose the five finalists from a competition in which they had to complete a tie-breaker beginning: "My favourite World Cup breakfast..." Chris wrote in: "...gives hunger the red card." His mother, Janet Squire, insisted: "He thought up the line himself."

The competition was called Kick and Win a Million, as the prize is one million French francs. The cereal maker, Nabisco, is a sponsor of the World Cup finals in France next summer.

Only one of the five, a 45-year-old man from Bishopstown, Cork, has asked somebody else to step in. Finbar Long has nominated 42-year-old John Flynn to take the shots for him. "John has played more football than me and coaches a youth team in Ballincollig, so he knows what he is doing," he said. If they win, they have agreed to split the money.

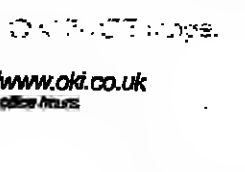
Geraldine Quiriga, 21, from Liverpool, the sole woman, is a former left back for St John Moore's University, Liverpool. "As long as I do not do a Gareth Southgate in the first round, I will be happy," she said.

A mechanical and engineering student, Quiriga could do with the money to buy a new television. "Ours has just packed in," she said.

Another contestant, Ian Hudson, 38 from Alcester, has persuaded his wife to take up goalkeeping so that he can practise.

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CRICKET

Tufnell will plead forgetfulness to Lord's drug panel

By ALAN LEE, CRICKET CORRESPONDENT

CRICKET must today confront its fourth drugs case in little more than a year, conscious that this one is different in two uncomfortable ways. Philip Tufnell, unlike the three previous miscreants, is a high-profile England player; he is also not accused of failing a drugs test but of refusing to take one.

Tufnell knows that he can expect no special treatment for the first factor and no easy forgiveness for the second. He must also know that the potential consequences of his disciplinary hearing at Lord's are grave. Any suspension would automatically exclude him from the winter tour to the West Indies — probably bringing a recall for Peter Such — but this would be merely the start of his problems.

No English cricketer since Ian Botham has slipped on so many banana skins as Tufnell. His Test career has produced occasional delight but regular disillusionment and patience in high places has long since run thin.

Middlesex, his only employer since he left school, have provided a constant crutch in troubled times and they are evidently supporting him again now. Indeed, the strength of their faith, and the nature of their evidence, is likely to have a crucial bearing on the hearing.

The relevant game was the last of the season, a championship match at Chelmsford. Tufnell, still bathed in the glory of his match-winning bowling during the Oval Test against Australia, was randomly chosen for a routine drugs test, along with his team-mate, Paul Weekes. They were, apparently, the first Middlesex players selected for testing during the season.

What happened next is central. It will, I understand, be Tufnell's assertion that he presented himself to the testing room during the lunch interval but found himself

unable to give the required urine sample. If this is so, and accepted by the disciplinary panel, then his subsequent failure to return at close of play will surely be treated far more leniently than if it is found he did not attend at all.

Tufnell has said that he simply forgot. Other theories advanced have been concerns about an eye injury that affected him during the game and about the health of his wife. It will be a sensitive task for the panel to adjudicate on such claims when, if they wish, they can simply refer Tufnell to the guidelines of the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) that give warn-



Tufnell: case to answer

ing that anyone failing to comply with the drug testing procedure is "liable to be dealt with as if you have been shown to have a prohibited substance in your body".

Tufnell will be represented today by his union, the Professional Cricketers Association (PCA), but can expect no blind loyalty from them on the general issue. The PCA is itself taking a proactive stance to rid cricket of the stigma of drugs and some of its officers were dismayed at what they perceived as the lenient treatment of the most recent culprit, Keith Piper.

The Warwickshire wicket-keeper tested positive in June, when the county took the

unprecedented step of subjecting their entire playing staff to unscheduled tests before a net session. Cannabis, the drug involved, is not on the Sports Council's list of banned substances and Warwickshire, free to assess the punishment themselves, banned Piper for one match and fined him a week's wages.

Warwickshire's action in testing all their players was admirable but also self-protective as the two previous drugs cases dealt with by the ECB involved one man about to play for them, Ed Giddins, and another, in Paul Smith, who admitted to cocaine abuse while on their staff.

It is a moot point whether many, if any, county dressing-rooms would prove to be entirely clean of "social drugs" if all were tested on the same basis, but, stung in particular by the case of Smith, whose extravagant newspaper allegations reflected discredit on the game, cricket is striving to eliminate both the reality and the suspicion of drugs.

It is into these disturbed, distrustful waters that Tufnell must go today. To some extent he will be throwing himself on the mercy of the panel, trying to convince them that he was not being evasive, far less indicating guilt, on the day in question. A great deal hangs on the powers of such persuasion.

Heading the panel will be Gerard Elias, QC, the chairman of the board's discipline committee and unequivocal in his attitude to drugs in cricket. "We owe a duty to generations to come to maintain the game as it should be played," he said recently. "Drugs can have no part in our game."

Elias will have been involved in the drafting of the board's anti-drugs charter and can have no doubt over its legal safety. But, after so many blatant brushes with authority, it will be ironic indeed if Tufnell's most damaging punishment were to be caused by a sin of omission.

Uncorking the champagne moments

John Hopkins, golf correspondent, sifts readers' responses to his appeal for an intoxicating celebration of the sport

Bobby Jones's feat of winning the Amateur and Open championships of Britain and the United States in 1930 — which became known as the Impregnable Quadrilateral, and was the forerunner of the modern grand slam — has been selected as the greatest moment in the history of golf. The announcement came after a year-long search. Some of the great and the good of the golfing world who formed the judging panel chose four more achievements from the game's long history. These were Jack Nicklaus's accomplishments in his professional career — that is, from 1961 to the present — and his individual success at the 1986 Masters, when he was 46.

Then came Byron Nelson's 11 consecutive victories on the US PGA Tour in 1945 and the victory by Francis Ouimet, an amateur, over Harry Vardon and Ted Ray in the 1913 US Open.

To these non-American eyes, there seems a certain bias towards events in that country. That, however, was only half the competition. I listed my own 25 great moments and asked for yours, for which I said I would award a bottle of champagne to the best.

For sheer brass neck, Oscar G. Caceres, a lawyer in Guatemala City, takes the biscuit. Whereas every other correspondent ruminates on the 25 moments as outlined and centred up with a broadly similar list, Mr Caceres went for something completely different. "Reading your article," he wrote cheerily, "it has come back to my memory the net 59 I shot with a 17 handicap playing a local championship at the Guatemala Country Club here in Guatemala City." Congratulations, Mr Caceres. No doubt your handicap is no longer 17.

Nigel Potter's thoughtful

list might have been a contender were it not for the fact that he dares to dispute with *The Times* the date of James II's famous decree against football and golf. Perhaps I did get that wrong. Mr Potter, but you can't spell Joyce Wethered's surname.

The briefest entry came from Graham Bradley, of Purley. His two nominations were Gary Player's semi-final victory against Tony Lema in the 1965 World Match Play Championship, an event that received support from many correspondents, as did Nick Faldo's upset of Greg Norman at the Masters last year. Mr Bradley's other suggestion was Severiano Ballesteros's putt on the 72nd green at St Andrews in the 1984 Open. Mr Bradley added a PS: "What about golf's saddest moment?" saying that he felt it was Roberto de Vicenzo's scorecard disaster at the 1968 Masters.

There was considerable support for the original code of rules to be named. Digby Peel Yates cites them "not only for the insight they give us into the playing conditions in 1744 — what would our modern putters have made of those greens with the next tee within a club's length of the hole? — but also as the start of endless wrangles, disputes, decisions and general hassle over the years".

Still, the letter that really got my attention concentrated on one hole and is described in vivid detail. The moment was Ben Hogan's playing of the 72nd hole at Carnoustie in the 1953 Open Championship. "My memory says like a glass of Glenfiddich," John Magill writes from Glasgow.

"On the 18th tee, the little below average height, little dark Texan, conservatively dressed in white cap, yellow slipover and cardigan, took stance and aim to make his final drive, knowing full well a cast-iron four would clinch



Ballesteros celebrates his moment of triumph at St Andrews in 1984

the title. The tension was evident after the executed swing. It was a slasher's swing, the ball was caught very thin (nearly a Killarney shot, it is along the ground); it hardly rose ten feet or more and sped to-

wards, a trio of shallow bunkers. The great man's luck held. The ball went right through them and rested on grass just beyond. The approach No 5 iron was played and landed about two feet short of the green.

Mr Magill concludes: "Such memory sings for ever and ever. I saw the Great Man." I am sorry I can't send a bottle of Glenfiddich to Mr Magill. I hope champagne will be acceptable. Thank you to everyone who entered.

Warwickshire confident of signing unpredictable Lara

By SIMON WILDE

THE turbulent relationship between Brian Lara and Warwickshire appeared to be heading for calmer waters yesterday when the club received a verbal assurance by telephone from Lara, who was on his way to Pakistan with the West Indies team, that he will, after all, return to the county in 1998. Earlier this week a source close to him said that he was having second thoughts about the one-year deal.

There could still be many a slip 'twixt cup and lip, however. Warwickshire are awaiting written confirmation from the West Indies board that Lara will not be required to play in domestic matches during the early weeks of the English season. If that is not forthcoming, Warwickshire would almost certainly look elsewhere. If it is — and Warwickshire expect clearance within the next four weeks — Lara's contract will then be signed on his behalf by his agent.

"Brian was always coming to us and he said he does not know where the rumours came from," Dennis Amis, the Warwickshire chief executive, said. "We hope to get a contract to him in the next month. Brian indicated that he expects to be available to us at the end of April."

Lara's track record is not good, however. He completed one record-breaking season with Warwickshire in 1994, but after they thought they had signed him ahead of Allan Donald on a three-year deal starting in 1996 he pulled out, citing exhaustion.

That decision did not endear him to a dressing-room irritated by his previous pleas for special treatment and his publicity stunts (he took a mobile telephone onto the field during a match at Taunton). Donald refused to fill the gap. Fortu-



Lara: dubious track record

nately for Lara, Dermot Reeve, the former captain and his most vehement critic, has now left.

There is no question that Lara would be potentially an invaluable acquisition. He scored a phenomenal 1,423 runs in his first test championship innings in 1994, including a world record 501 not out against Durham, before his fame took its toll.

He refused to field in a match at Northampton after arguing with Reeve, produced a doctor's note recommending rest — he was granted one week — and in his last 15 championship innings scored only 643 runs.

Another complicating factor is the West Indies captaincy. Any decision to install Lara as captain in succession to Courtney Walsh, who is 35 next week, could affect his plans. Walsh is leading the team in Pakistan but defeat there could prompt a change for the series with England that starts in January.

Nottinghamshire, meanwhile, have lined up Paul Strang, the Zimbabwean, as their next overseas player. He is keen to return to county cricket.

Saqibain Mushtaq will rejoin Surrey depending on how frequently he will be wanted by Pakistan.

Stevens holds his nerve

By PHIL YATES

MATTHEW STEVENS stayed calm under pressure once again yesterday to claim a 5-4 victory over John Parrott and a place in the semi-finals of the Grand Prix in Bournemouth.

Stevens, 20, edged out Mark Williams, the title-holder, 5-4 in the third round and Billy Snaddon by the same score in the last round after trailing 4-2. Against Parrott, he was 4-3 down with two frames to play after relinquishing a 3-2 lead. Parrott led 35-0 in the eighth frame when he missed a tricky black off its spot with the reds spread invitingly.

Stevens made a 67 break to level at 4-4 and, when Parrott grossly misjudged a straight-forward safety shot in the final frame, Stevens put together a run of 62 and then fluked the penultimate red when containment was his sole intention. Three pots later, Parrott conceded.

"I played two strong frames to finish and that's satisfying," Stevens, the world No 53, said. "What happened against Mark and Billy stood me in good stead, because knowing that you are capable of fighting back gives you confidence to do it again."

Parrott, who, given the unexpected composition of the line-up in the quarter-final was entitled to a degree of optimism about his chances of ending a barren run of title success that stretches back to the European Open of March 1996, pinpointed his mistake on the black in the eighth frame as the turning point in the match. "If I hadn't missed that I would have won, so obviously it's very frustrating," he said.

Jimmy White's quest for his first trophy in a world ranking event since the United Kingdom championship of November 1992 continues today when he plays Mick Price, of Nuneaton, in their quarter-final. White is expected to win, even though on the three previous occasions that they have played each other Price has won each time.

John Higgins, who is now favourite to take the Grand Prix title and the £60,000 first prize, plays John Read, who has already enjoyed a memorable week, registering victories over Ronnie O'Sullivan, the world No 7, and Tony Drago, the world No 11, during which he was particularly impressive under pressure. Overcoming Higgins will require much of the same steel.

Problems still stand in the way of growth, not least the recent loss of Allison Fisher, the seven times world champion, now resident in the United States and competing on the lucrative Nine Ball pool tour. Fisher boasted victories over Mike Hallett, Tony Drago and Neil Foulds in competition before her departure.

DESPITE losing their National League status three seasons ago, Harborne have held their own in the DTJ Midlands premier division and have now emerged as leaders (Cathy Harrie writes). According to Trevor Clarke, the Harborne coach, a key difficulty has been the presence of three other former National League sides in the struggle to win the title and qualify for the play-offs.

Clarke, the former national coach to England and Canada, said: "Edgbaston, Coventry and Olton have been there before, which makes it very difficult. In the last three seasons we've played 54 games and lost three, but we haven't done the important bit." It is a familiar story throughout the regions.

CYCLING

Boardman eyes an Irish start to Tour

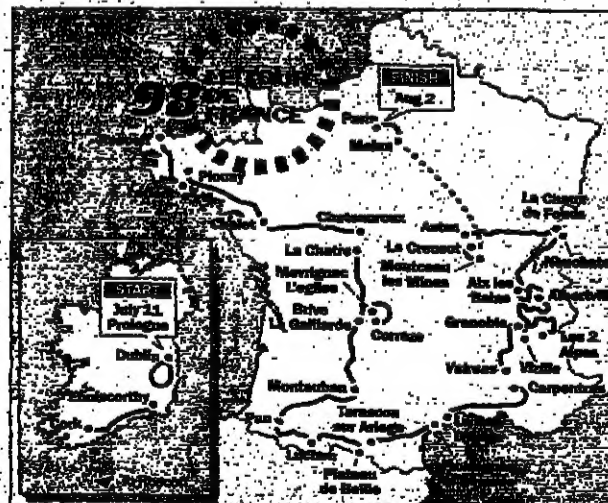
CHRIS BOARDMAN was studying his atlas last night after the route of the 1998 Tour de France was announced in Paris (Peter Bryan writes). The 3,875km race starts on July 11 — a week later than normal, to lessen the clash with football's World Cup finals in France — with a 5.7km prologue time-trial through the centre of Dublin.

This is followed by two road race stages in the Irish countryside before the event moves to France. Boardman is familiar with both the Irish pro-

logue circuit and the early routes down the west of France towards the Pyrenees, where the first serious mountain stage takes place between Pau to Luchon on July 21.

"The next day from Luchon to Plateau de Beille (170km) could be a hard one," he said yesterday. "I don't recall the Plateau de Beille being in the Tour before but I have ridden it in another race and it's a demanding climb."

After crossing the Alps the Tour will spend two days in Switzerland.



HOCKEY: ENGLAND TRIP TO CAIRO GOES AHEAD AS REGIONAL LEADERS EYE RETURN TO NATIONAL STAGE

Egyptian tour survives setbacks

By SYDNEY FRISKIN

ENGLAND are to go ahead with their proposed trip to Egypt, despite the cancellation of a men's international tournament that was due to start in Cairo on November 2.

After Germany, Malaysia and Poland had withdrawn from an original field of six, approval had been given by the International Hockey Federation for an official three-nation tournament involving Egypt, India and England to be played in Cairo. There was also to be an unofficial tournament between England, India and two Egyptian teams but, when India pulled out, those plans fell through, too.

David Whittle, the England manager, said yesterday that the team would depart on Thursday to play five fixtures against Egypt, two of which will be official internationals.

"The main thing is we have managed to salvage something from the tour rather than let it fall apart," he said. In his view, the matches will give the England players a chance to start a competitive programme with Barry Dancer, their new Australian coach.

Cannock, Southgate and Hounslow will strive to keep their unbeaten records in the National League premier division this weekend. Cannock will still be without Kalbir Talher, their centre half, whose ankle injury has not healed, but their task, compared with those of their two rivals, is less forbidding. They are away to Barford Tigers tomorrow, and on Sunday they entertain Beeston, whom they have already beaten convincingly. Southgate, with

Craig O'Hagan, the South Africa centre half, in their squad, are away to their old rivals, Hounslow, and will take on East Grinstead on Sunday.

East Grinstead are hoping for more goals from Gibson, who scored twice in the 3-2 victory against Doncaster last week. Hounslow ought to be at full strength, although Williamson's injured thumb might keep him out of action. They face a testing time on Sunday when they travel to Teddington, who put themselves on the road to recovery by defeating Guildford 4-0 last week.

Reading, the title-holders, who lost 4-0 to Canterbury a fortnight ago, will be seeking revenge when they entertain the Kent club on Sunday. Both sides expect to be at full strength.

Harborne struggle to find route back to the top

DESPITE losing their National League status three seasons ago, Harborne have held their own in the DTJ Midlands premier division and have now emerged as leaders (Cathy Harrie writes). According to Trevor Clarke, the Harborne coach, a key difficulty has been the presence of three other former National League sides in the struggle to win the title and qualify for the play-offs.

Clarke, the former national coach to England and Canada, said: "Edgbaston, Coventry and Olton have been there before, which makes it very difficult. In the last three seasons we've played 54 games and lost three, but we haven't done the important bit." It is a familiar story throughout the regions.

Two more former National League clubs, Whitcomb and Taunton, are unbeaten at the head of the West table. Peterborough and Cambridge City are top in the East and City of Portsmouth are undefeated in the ESL South League. Not all clubs are as fortunate. There is a general exodus of leading players when clubs go down from the National League and for some the downward spiral can prove terminal.

Westcliff, founder-members, disbanded last year, and Brea are in the lower leagues in the West after amalgamating with Portishead to form North Somerset. There are exceptions and, after several dreadful seasons, Broxbourne have achieved successive promotions.

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Just one chance? That would be a fine thing

Forgive me, please, for returning to the subject of Carol Vorderman for the second time in a fortnight, but even by her own standards of ubiquity this has been a truly remarkable week. Five instalments of *Countdown*, one lamentable *Antique Insiders*, a so-so *Mystery* with... the starting line in *This Is Your Life* and a very short skit and now this, a series they have the gall to call *Just One Chance* (BBC2). When did Vorderman ever settle for just one of anything?

Anyway, here she is, joined by a rather hot looking Martin Bashir, promising us and a studio audience (always a worrying sign) a no-nonsense guide to schools.

Celebrating the best and investigating where things are going wrong, added Bashir, looking like a man who still hasn't worked out what he was doing there, I sat back and waited. Quite looking forward to it, if it were to be.

Like girls, proper jobs and pensions, knowing about education is a sort of rite of passage and one that I have barely begun. I was hoping that Vorderman and Bashir might be offering a short cut, but alas not. In fact, it didn't take me very long to discover that if I was looking for answers to questions such as how does anybody afford private education or what do you do if your local primary school is horrible, I'd be better off with *Mysteries*.

Either I'd walked into the advanced education class (sorry, Miss, I was looking for elementary) or I was watching a programme that seemed reluctant to set out its own parameters. By a process of osmosis (the television screen being one of the best semi-permeable membranes around), I wrote out that we seemed to be concentrating exclusively on the state system. The nearest we got to an alternative to the local compre-

hensive was the phrase "creamed off". It's what happens to brighter pupils apparently. What a hideous, judgemental, elitist concept, I thought - I'd like to know more about that.

But not on this programme - it was either The Ridings or computer revision aids with The Clever and Beautiful One. "Not surprisingly, I wanted to test computer maths," she purred. So why did she get a bunch of teenagers and a geologist to do it for her? Pressure of work, I suppose.

On the subject of serial appearances, the actor Grant Masters needs a careful eye keeping on him. I know because something - probably the screaming tyres in the opening ten minutes - made me check what I wrote about: *Thief Takers* (ITV) last year, I appear to have been impressed, just as I was eventually, impressed again last night as the

REVIEW

Matthew Bond

noisy, high-gloss style made way for some serious substance delivered by David José Buckley's script. But wait, there was something else from last year. "The scenes between Gary McDonald and Grant Masters... were exceptionally strong, with Masters 'wreaking maximum menace from his role as a Manchester drug dealer.' So they were again last night, only this

time Masters is playing DC Oxford's boss, DI Glen Matteo. Now, I don't want to get in the way of anybody's career, but I think baddies coming back as goodies one series later is not something to be encouraged. Keeping track of the plot of *Thief Takers* is quite complicated enough as it is. What's happened to Pooky Quesnel, for instance? I know DI Scott's wife got shot, so that would explain why his office was empty, but nobody shot Pooky, aka DC Grace Harris, did they? I'm sure I'd have remembered. Or is she coming back as a baddie next time around?

Thankfully, the arrival for should I say return of Masters put a stop to such idle speculation. Within minutes he had injected humour, authority and energy into the production and we were moving forward again. The series still has the style of a feature film (there were echoes of *White Heat*, The

Long Good Friday and all sorts of things by John Carpenter), but last night, at least, it had a good enough script to make it impossible to dismiss it as a 1990s version of *The Sweeney*. Buckley's script worked both as simple cops and robbers but also intelligently explored the ever sensitive issue of race, with a story that involved an incompetent black policeman, a very nasty black villain and two black heroes, only one of whom made it to the final credits.

While we're on the subject, I do wonder whether users of black street slang are wearying of its growing exploitation by television writers these days. "Respect to my motor, respect to me," was one of the duffer lines last night. So soon after Tony Marchant's *Holding On*, I think that's probably 'nuff respect to be going on with.

Finally: ER returned, not to

Channel 4 but to Sky One, no doubt causing a certain amount of consternation to the undishd or uncabled among its fans. It also caused a bit of a flap around here. With Channel 4 not showing the latest series until 1998, how much of the plot should I give away? Do you want to know whether Doug (George Clooney) and Carol (Julianne Moore) live happily ever after, or don't you? Thankfully, the first episode makes things easy, as it was a one-off that was shown live (or live-ish, depending on who you believe) in America a few weeks ago, but was obviously a recording in this country. Using a fly-on-the-wall documentary as the excuse for flooding the ER with cameras, it was a technical and artistic triumph, but one which didn't move the running storylines along much. All I can say about Doug and Carol is... it's looking promising.

BBC1

- 6.00am Business Breakfast (04417)
- 7.00am BBC Breakfast News (0524183)
- 9.00am Not Cook, Won't Cook (0524947)
- 9.30am Style Challenge (0524947)
- 9.55am Kilroy (0520204)
- 10.35am Change That (0525144)
- 11.00am News (T) and weather (0738540)
- 11.05am The Really Useful Show (T) (0738386)
- 11.30am Room for Improvement (0386837)
- 12.00pm News (T) and weather (0738540)
- 12.05pm Call My Bluff (0741363)
- 12.30pm Going for a Song (0517327)
- 1.00pm News (T) and weather (074144)
- 1.30pm Regional News and weather (0741445)
- 1.40pm The Weather Show (0741363)
- 2.10pm Neighbours (T) (0741363)
- 2.15pm Outcry (T) (0741363)
- 3.00pm Through the Keyhole Last in series (1105253)
- 3.25pm The Really Useful Show (052366)
- 3.50pm Playdays (0527453) 3.50pm Dear Mr Barter (0527453) 4.00pm The New Pope (0527453) 4.10pm The New Pope (0527453) 4.30pm The New Pope (0527453) 4.50pm The New Pope (0527453) 5.00pm The New Pope (0527453) 5.10pm The New Pope (0527453) 5.30pm The New Pope (0527453) 5.50pm The New Pope (0527453) 6.00pm The New Pope (0527453) 6.30pm The New Pope (0527453) 6.50pm The New Pope (0527453) 7.00pm The New Pope (0527453) 7.30pm The New Pope (0527453) 7.50pm The New Pope (0527453) 8.00pm The New Pope (0527453) 8.30pm The New Pope (0527453) 8.50pm The New Pope (0527453) 9.00pm The New Pope (0527453) 9.30pm The New Pope (0527453) 9.50pm The New Pope (0527453) 10.00pm The New Pope (0527453) 10.30pm The New Pope (0527453) 10.50pm The New Pope (0527453) 11.00pm The New Pope (0527453) 11.30pm The New Pope (0527453) 11.50pm The New Pope (0527453) 12.00pm The New Pope (0527453) 12.30pm The New Pope (0527453) 12.50pm The New Pope (0527453) 1.00pm The New Pope (0527453) 1.30pm The New Pope (0527453) 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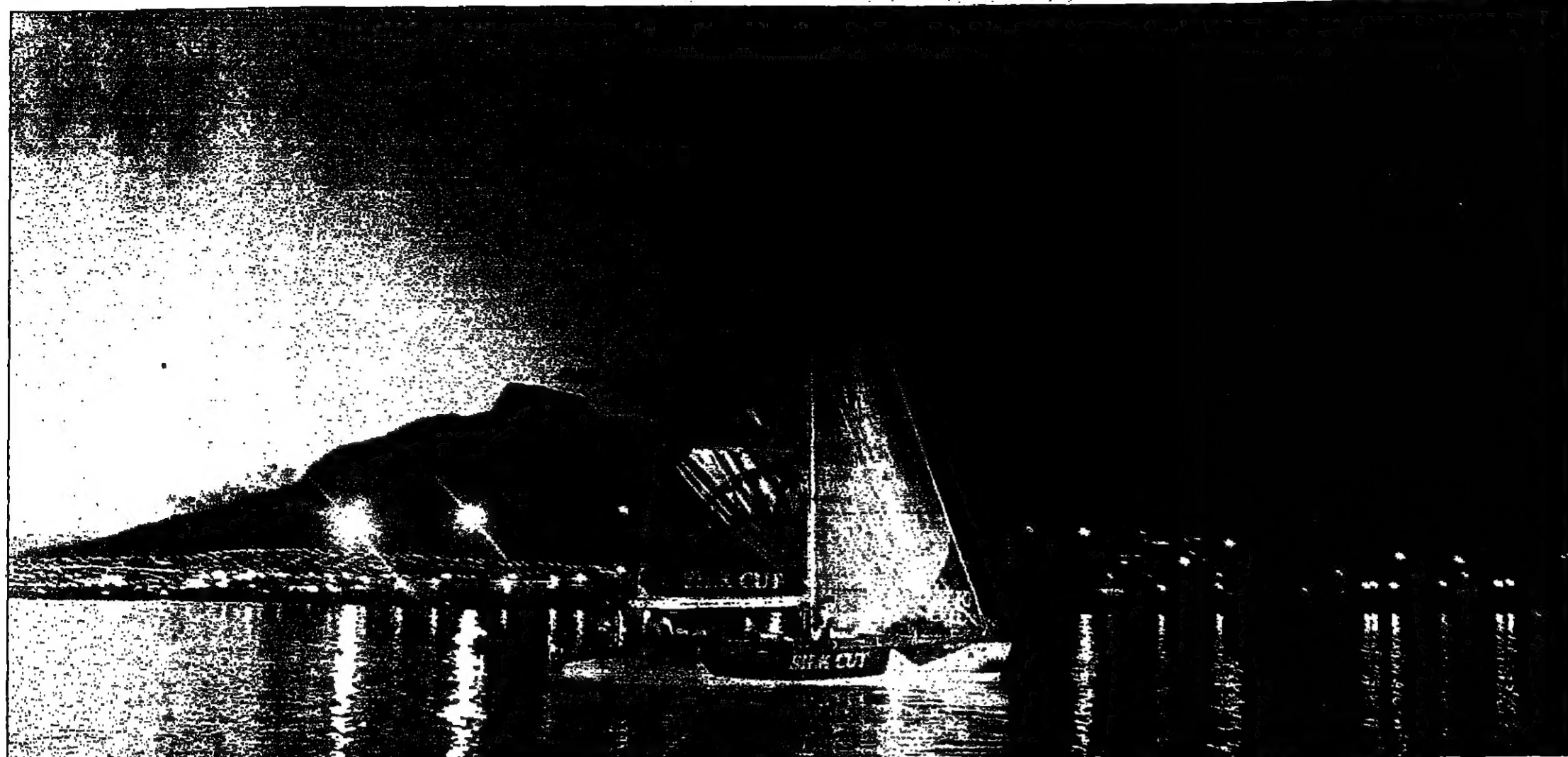
SPORT

TENNIS 46

Henman pays for early follies in Stuttgart



FRIDAY OCTOBER 24 1997



Dawn run: Silk Cut, skippered by Lawrie Smith, crosses the line under the shadow of Table Mountain after finishing fourth in the first leg of the Whitbread Round The World Race early yesterday

Schumacher and Villeneuve determined to steer clear of controversy

Grand prix rivals apply the brakes

JACQUES VILLENEUVE blinked behind his grumpy glasses as a sudden surge signalled the belated arrival of Michael Schumacher at the circuit here yesterday afternoon. It was difficult to detect whether he was blinded by the incessant flashlights or bemused by the chaotic nature of the duel for the Formula One world championship.

Schumacher had been delayed at Cologne airport and barely had time to deposit his mongrel dog with a Ferrari aide before he was ushered into an airless room to conduct the tiresome chore of preliminary psychological sparring in the build up to the European Grand Prix. Villeneuve adopt-

ed an air of studied indifference as panic set in around him.

The German was serene, but in his haste he put on the wrong T-shirt, an unprepossessing black number that lacked the critical element of his cigarette sponsor's logo. Oblivious to the heretical aspect of the oversight, he smiled broadly and shook the Canadian by the hand. The sweat-soaked cameramen, who had amused themselves by scuffling among themselves, went predictably berserk.

Time was frozen for fully 15 seconds before someone in the crowd threw Schumacher the politically incorrect shirt that helps fund his £20 million

salary. He shrugged, screwed it into a ball, and put it on his lap as he sat down to face the fortnightly trial by inanity.

Formula One prides itself on its machismo culture, but this was closer in spirit to the Marx Brothers than Mad Max. The lights went out intermittently and the sound system spluttered into life only occasionally. Life, in the land of mahana, was proceeding so normally that, outside, they were blithely burning the remains of last week's rubbish on the inside of the Ayrton Senna Curve.

Separated by a single championship point, after the empty gesture of Villeneuve's defiance of disqualification from the Japanese Grand Prix, they were united by the need to project an image of assurance. Each smiled self-consciously, like a job applicant facing an employment panel. They were gracious and generous. In short, they were behaving entirely out of character.

The watching world, conditioned by reminders of Schumacher's brutally convenient collision with Damon Hill when the title was at stake in Adelaide in 1994, expects a cross between a gang fight and a race between dogmen cars here on Sunday. The winner will, in deference to the old cliché, take all, but, to

FROM MICHAEL CALVIN IN JEREZ

listen to the rivals yesterday, all is sweetness and light.

"It's fun, being on the edge like this," Villeneuve, who had evidently had his roots retouched for the occasion, said. "The stakes are high. The pressure is high. In three days here the whole season's work goes on the line. You do a whole year's work and it comes down to this. I can't wait for it."

Schumacher was also in Butlins Redcoat mode. "I hope we will both be on the front row and that we will be able to have our own race," he said. "It will be good for the fans. It is what everyone wants to see. I want it to be a straightforward fight between Jacques and me. I want it to be open and fair."

Of course, the facade of fun, fun, fun could not be sustained. There was the occasional edge to their self-promotional ramblings, especially when Schumacher denied that Eddie Irvine, his voluble Ferrari team-mate, had eased his path to victory at Suzuka by deliberately blocking Villeneuve.

The Canadian could not help himself and indulged in a burst of sardonic laughter. "Look at the lap times," Schumacher suggested, archly. Villeneuve countered with the casual observation that "Eddie blocked me for one lap. That gave Michael a three or four second lead and lost me the race."

So there. To reinforce the point, Villeneuve offered the hope that "the championship will not be decided by what Eddie or Heinz [Frentzen, his Williams team-mate] does." This was somewhat optimistic, since it pre-

supposed that the hapless Frentzen will be sufficiently on the pace to be a factor.

Still, the pitane's Smashey and Nicoy Show settled down to something approximating normality until the issue of Schumacher's sportsmanship was brought up for the umpteenth time. Villeneuve, apparently bored by proceedings, came over all philosophical.

"We know what we have to do," he said, somewhat superfluously, given that he had been continually reminded of his need to finish ahead of Schumacher. "There is no point in doing something unsporting if you can't live with it. I know I couldn't live with it, so I don't want to do something like that."

It took a microsecond for the audience to switch their attention to Schumacher's smiling face. He was innocently personified, and was at pains to counter the rumour that Ferrari's new electronic differential system is merely a subtle form of cheating. "There is no sense in doing anything like that," he said. "We just want to race. That is all."

Well, up to a point. Outside, in what passes as the real world despite its obvious artificiality, the paddock settled down to discuss personalities. Everyone has an opinion. Few are really valid, because everyone in a team uniform in

Formula One slavishly follows a hidden agenda.

Craig Pollock, Villeneuve's manager, at least veered off course heroically and insisted: "Jacques is extremely concerned about the possibility of Schumacher or his brother [Ralf] or Eddie Irvine taking him off. He's pretty confident, but if he doesn't win he'll try even harder next year. There's unfinished business here."

Speaking of business, Willi Weber, Schumacher's hirsute manager, has been doing his sums.

He estimates that a third world championship will generate around \$50 million in sales of Schumacher merchandise. That is an alarming prospect, given that the Germans who are converging on Jerez are already swathed from head to toe in the red of Ferrari red.

It is going to be a long, noisy, weekend.

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TOMORROW IN THE TIMES



GARETH SOUTHGATE
tells Oliver Holt that the road to redemption is a slow one



DANNY BAKER
Deep blues in Manchester



STEVE MCNAMARA
at Liverpool's European woes



DAVID HANDS
finds Matt Dawson taking nothing for granted after Lions heroics



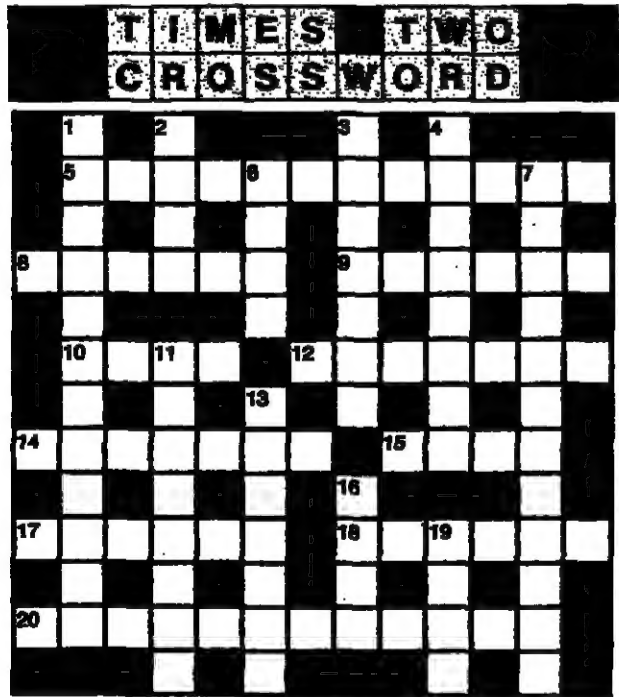
Simon Barnes
talks horses and money with John Whitaker



PLUS

David Hands finds Matt Dawson taking nothing for granted after Lions heroics

Simon Barnes talks horses and money with John Whitaker



No 1233

- ACROSS**
- 5 To compliment, praise (12)
 - 8 Organism as rust, yeast (6)
 - 9 Attractiveness; court case (6)
 - 10 It marches on its stomach (Napoleon) (4)
 - 12 Remedial treatment (7)
 - 14 Eg slip, cover (7)
 - 15 Expectorated: tiff (4)
 - 17 Relatives by marriage (2-4)
 - 18 Overseas (6)
 - 20 Ship's loading mark (8,4)
- DOWN**
- 1 Of one's job; sort of 6, 12, 13 (12)
 - 2 Comfy; a bar (4)
 - 3 Junior diplomat (7)
 - 4 Pretentious nonsense (8)
 - 6 Hazard (4)
 - 7 Merchant ship, no regular route (5,7)
 - 11 Stephane —, Fr. symbolist (8)
 - 13 Retirement income: boarding house (7)
 - 16 How! like baby (4)
 - 19 Bird; complain (4)

SOLUTION TO NO 1232

ACROSS: 1 Void 3 Cynical 8 Coppice 9 Phyla 10 Thong 11 Relapse 13 Pitch dark 17 Thumbel 19 Serge 20 Padre 22 Contact 23 Rebukes 24 Pear

DOWN: 1 Vacate 2 Impromptu 3 Clear the decks 4 Nepal 5 Cry 6 Leader 7 Midget 12 Poker face 14 Absent 15 Stupor 16 Mentor 18 Bleak 21 Dub

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England World Cup run-in to begin with Cameroon

AFTER serving notice on Europe that he has a team with genuine prospects of winning the World Cup, Glenn Hoddle is preparing to warn the rest of the globe. The England coach is determined that his plans for the tournament in France next summer should include warm-up fixtures against teams from several continents and, to that end, the Football Association kicked Africa off the list yesterday by confirming Cameroon as England's next opponents.

The Lions will visit Wembley on November 15 for a open kick-off and will provide a worthwhile test, as well as an enthralling game. They were one of the first teams to qualify for France, finishing unbeaten in a group containing Angola, Togo and Zimbabwe. They have produced a new generation of footballers since the era of Roger Mills, the flamboyant striker.

A decent crowd could have been expected at Wembley whoever the opponents, given the jubilation after England's draw in Rome. That the game is against Cameroon, who forced England into extra time before Bobby Robson's side gained a 3-2 victory in the quarter-finals of the 1990 World Cup, rather than the

less exotic alternatives of Portugal, Sweden and Finland, should add a few more to the game. The sides last met in February 1991, when Graham Taylor's side won 2-0, with both goals coming from Gary Lineker.

England's preparations are also likely to include a game against South American opponents, while South Korea are being considered as representatives of Asia. Wales and Northern Ireland are believed

to be keen on arranging a match against England, but Lancaster Gate officials are likely to look further afield.

Hoddle's predecessor, Terry Venables, meanwhile, has thrown his unequivocal support behind Hoddle's regime. The Australia coach, who will soon lead his team into a play-off for a place in the finals, believes England can do better than in Euro 96, when they lost to Germany in the semi-finals. "They are among the best sides in the world and

I have no doubt they can win the World Cup," Venables said.

"They look really impressive. I would back them all the way. Glenn has put together a strong squad of players and has done brilliantly to follow on from where I left off after Euro 96. It is one of the best squads I can remember and that has to be down a lot to the strength of the Premiership."

England's bid for the 2006 World Cup took a new turn yesterday when it was revealed that grounds in Wales and Scotland were being considered as venues.

The idea, which is unlikely to be welcomed by Fifa, was mooted by Alec McQueen, director of the bid. "This is purely something we are considering for organisation purposes," he said. "We will have first-class stadia on our doorstep in Glasgow and Cardiff and they could be part of our plans to help stage the 32-nation finals."

"There is no suggestion this is anything other than an England bid. England, as the host nation, would be the only one to qualify automatically."

The Football Association has sent a delegation to South America to lobby support for England's case.

Ma's girl Jiang sets world best

BY DAVID POWELL
ATHLETICS CORRESPONDENT

MA JUNREN had predicted another world record from one of his athletes and what Ma predicts, Ma usually gets. Yesterday, in the final of the 5000 metres at the China National Games in Shanghai, Jiang Bo improved the women's world record to 14min 28.09sec — three seconds inside the mark set by Dong Yanmei on Tuesday.

The world record before the National Games was 14:36.45, set by Fernanda Ribeiro, from Portugal, in 1995.

Jiang's time yesterday, 14:28.09sec, is 8.36sec quicker than Ribeiro's figures. After Dong had recorded 14:31.27 in the heats, followed by Jiang in 14:31.30, Ma said: "They could have run faster." He added that they would do so in the final.

Jiang said that she was looking forward to the Olympic Games. Ma said: "I want to assure all the Chinese people that my runners can win at least three gold medals in the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games."

And what Ma predicts, Ma usually gets.

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